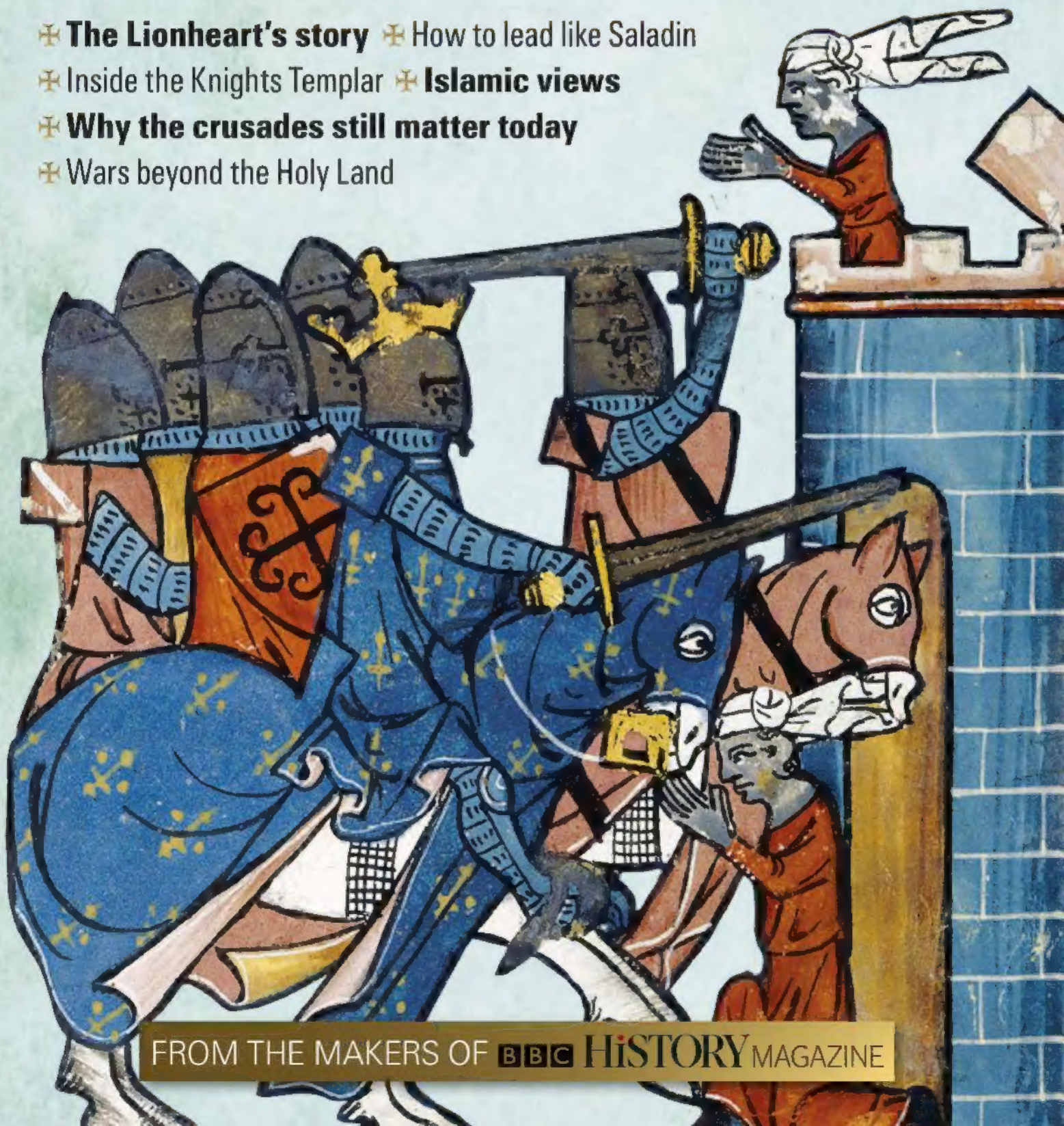


BBC

Collector's Edition

THE CRUSADES

- ✠ **The Lionheart's story** ✠ How to lead like Saladin
- ✠ Inside the Knights Templar ✠ **Islamic views**
- ✠ **Why the crusades still matter today**
- ✠ Wars beyond the Holy Land



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EDITORIAL

Editor Jon Bauckham
jon.bauckham@immediate.co.uk
Editor (BBC History Magazine) Rob Attar
Production editor Peter Beech
Picture editor Katherine Mitchell
katherine.mitchell@immediate.co.uk
Art editor Sarah Lambert
Additional work by Rob Blackmore,
Michael Cocks, John Evans, Susanne
Frank, Fay Glinister, Samantha Nott

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PR manager Emma Cooney 0117 300 8507
emma.cooney@immediate.co.uk

SYNDICATION

Director of licensing & syndication Tim Hudson
International partners' manager Molly Hope-Seton

PRODUCTION

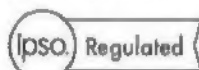
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Managing Director, Consumer Products and Licensing: Stephen Davies
Head of publishing Mandy Thwaites
Compliance manager Cameron McEwan
Chair, Editorial Review Boards Nicholas Brett
Publishing coordinator Eva Abramik
(uk.publishing@bbc.com)



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“ Few areas of medieval history have managed to capture the popular imagination quite like the crusades. In everything from 19th-century novels to Hollywood blockbusters, tales of valiant Christian warriors riding towards the Holy Land have been romanticised and scrutinised in equal measure.

In this collector's edition of *BBC History Magazine*, we'll separate fact from fiction, beginning by looking at the chain of events that **sparked the crusading movement** in the 11th century. We'll offer expert insight into the **lives of the ordinary people** who went on crusade, and the variety of factors – both **religious and financial** – that motivated them to join the fight.

We'll meet the cast of characters whose stories still loom large, including **Richard the Lionheart** and **Saladin**, assessing the qualities that made both men such effective leaders. We'll also look at how 'crusading' stretched **beyond the Holy Land**, exploring the violent wars against pagans and heretics that unfolded as far afield as the Baltics.

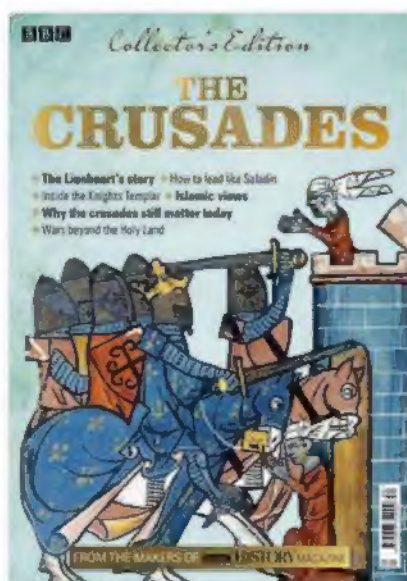
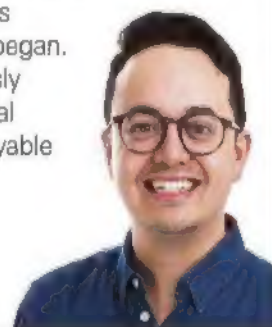
Crucially, we'll shine a spotlight on the complex state of **Muslim and crusader relations**, and examine the extent to which the traditional narrative of a 'clash of civilisations' between **Islam and Christianity** holds true in the face of recent scholarship.

Finally, we'll analyse the impact of the crusades on the **modern world**, and discuss the shadow still cast by these infamous medieval conflicts nearly a thousand years after they first began.

The Crusades brings together articles that have previously appeared in *BBC History Magazine*, along with new material written especially for this edition. I hope you find it an enjoyable and informative read.

Jon Bauckham

Editor



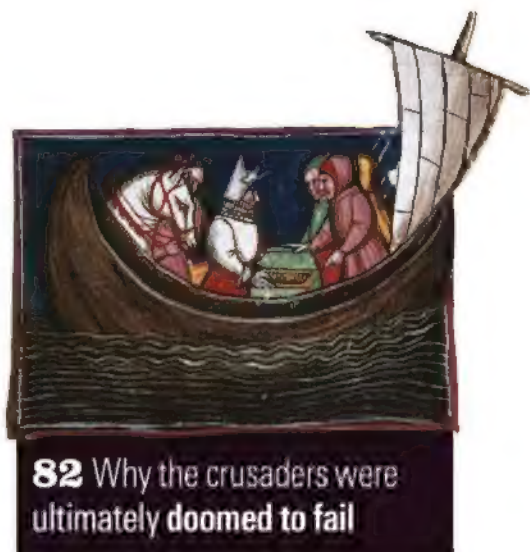
“ The idea that crusaders set off over the horizon without knowing where they were going is a modern myth “

CHRISTOPHER TYERMAN describes the process of manning, planning and executing a crusade on page 22

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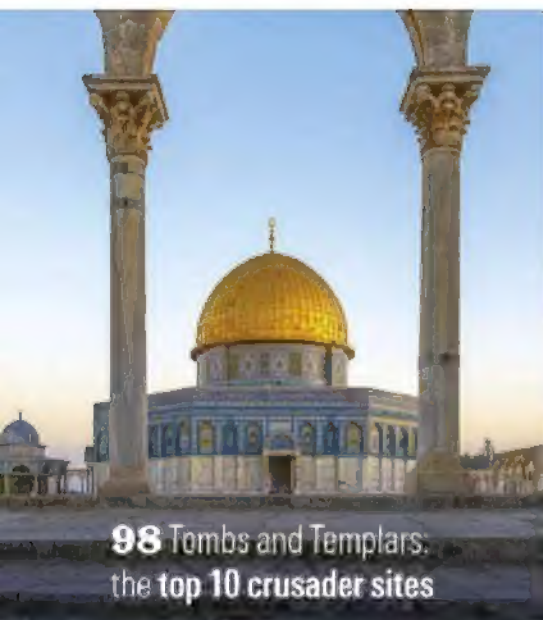
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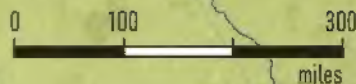
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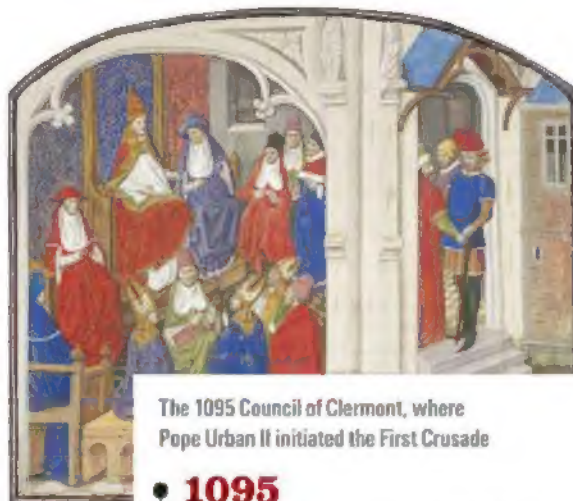


**Europe and the Holy Land
in the 13th Century**



Timeline

Sophie Thérèse Ambler describes the events that shaped Christendom and the Islamic world during the long struggle for the Holy Land



The 1095 Council of Clermont, where Pope Urban II initiated the First Crusade

1071

Turks overrun the Byzantine border

After taking control of Iraq and Syria, the Seljuk Turks under the command of Sultan Alp Arslan defeat Byzantine forces at the battle of Manzikert and conquer Anatolia.

The Christians march out of Antioch to face the Turks in 1098. The city lay in a crucial position on the route to Palestine

28 June 1098

St George 'saves' the crusaders

The Franks march out of Antioch to engage Kerbogha's forces in an all-or-nothing battle. According to participant reports, they see "a countless host of men on white horses, whose banners were all white": heavenly reinforcements led by St George, St Mercurius and St Demetrius.

1090



Alexius I Comnenus appealed to western Europe for help fighting the Seljuk Turks

1096

The First Crusade gets underway

Christian knights and pilgrims from the west, known as the Franks, journey towards the Holy Land, taking Nicaea and surviving a ferocious Seljuk attack at Dorylaeum. They besiege Antioch in northern Syria, finally entering the city in June 1098 – before they, in turn, are besieged by the forces of Kerbogha, the atabeg (governor) of Mosul.

1099

The Holy City is conquered

Inspired by victory at Antioch, the crusaders march on Jerusalem, capturing the city from the Fatimids in July and massacring the inhabitants. Godfrey of Bouillon, who engineers the victory, is chosen as first ruler of Jerusalem.

French nobleman Godfrey of Bouillon led the successful siege of Jerusalem



March 1095

A call from the east

A papal council at Piacenza receives an envoy from the Byzantine emperor, Alexius I Comnenus. Assailed and desperate, the Byzantines plead for military assistance against the Seljuks – and Pope Urban II determines to respond.



The death of Roger of Salerno at the battle of the Field of Blood on 28 June 1119

1119

Christian forces meet disaster

With the four new crusader states established after the First Crusade (Jerusalem, Antioch, Edessa and Tripoli) politically unstable, the regent of Antioch, Roger of Salerno, engages the Turkmen ruler Ilghazi. His army is annihilated in a battle known as the Field of Blood.

1110

1105

A call to jihad

In the wake of the Christian victory, a jurispudent from Damascus, Ali ibn Tahir al-Sulami, preaches a sermon calling on Muslims to take up arms in jihad against the Franks.



A hospice in Jerusalem owned by the German Order of St John, which descends from the Hospitallers

1113

The Hospitallers established

Pope Paschal II recognises the Hospital of St John as an independent religious order. Originally founded before the First Crusade to care for pilgrims in Jerusalem, the Hospitallers later transform into a military force between the 1120s and 1160s.

1129

The Templars swear oaths

Under the guidance of Bernard of Clairvaux and grand master Hugh de Payns, the first rule of the Knights Templar is drawn up. Members of the order, originally founded in 1119, are sworn to abandon worldly goods and devote their lives to protecting pilgrims and defending the crusader states.

A chapel fresco showing a Templar knight charging into battle at al-Buqaia, modern Lebanon, 1163





The cover of the *Melisende Psalter* depicts scenes from the life of David in ivory and turquoise

1131

A crusader queen takes the throne

Melisende, daughter of Baldwin II, ascends the throne of Jerusalem with her husband, Fulk V of Anjou. She later commissions a manuscript known as the *Melisende Psalter*, one of the most stunning artworks of the era.

1147–49

The Second Crusade ends in failure

Crusader armies – led by Conrad of Germany and Louis VII of France, accompanied by his queen, Eleanor of Aquitaine – are overwhelmed by the Seljuks. After a failed attempt on Damascus, Louis and Eleanor return home.



1130

1150

1170



The siege of Edessa in 1144. The city's fall was the catalyst for the Second Crusade

1144

The resurgence of the Seljuks

Imad al-Din Zangi, a Turkish atabeg, conquers Edessa on behalf of the Seljuks. Pope Eugenius III responds by launching a new crusade, with a preaching campaign led by Bernard of Clairvaux.

1169

Saladin emerges

Nur al-Din, son of Zangi, appoints as head of his armies in Egypt a young Kurdish commander named Salah al-Din – perhaps more commonly known today as Saladin. Gathering power, he goes on to conquer Syria by the mid-1170s before leading attacks on the kingdom of Jerusalem.

1183

A literary giant writes his masterpiece

Usama ibn Munqidh, a leading diplomat and warrior who goes on to serve Saladin in his later years, describes in his remarkable *Book of Contemplation* his encounters – and occasional friendships – with the Franks.



A 16th-century portrait of Saladin, great sultan of Egypt and Syria – and Richard the Lionheart's mighty opponent

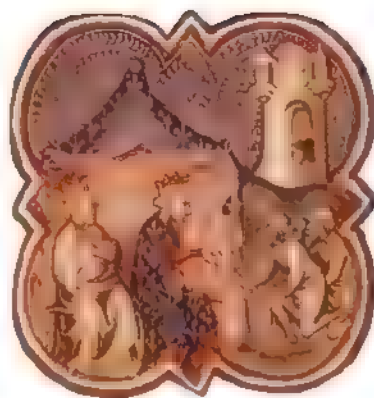


Guy de Lusignan, King of Jerusalem, surrenders to Saladin at the battle of Hattin on 4 July 1187

July 1187

Catastrophe shakes Christendom

Saladin's campaign against the Christians triumphs at the battle of Hattin, where he obliterates the army of the kingdom of Jerusalem, captures the prized Christian relic of the True Cross, and oversees the beheading of captured Templars and Hospitallers. He goes on to seize the city of Jerusalem in October



The Muslims of Acre surrender the keys of the city to Philip II and Richard I after the siege

June–August 1191

The Lionheart arrives at Acre

Richard (who acquires the name 'Lionheart' due to his brave leadership) brings his army to join the siege of Acre. He takes the city, and – wanting to press on and claiming that Saladin has stalled ongoing negotiations – orders some 2,700 Muslim prisoners to be executed in view of both armies

1208

The rise of the Mongol empire

The warlord Temüjin is elected leader of the Mongols and assumes the title Chinggis (Genghis) Khan. Over the following decades, he and his successors conquer north China, what will become Iran and Turkmenistan, and the Seljuk sultanate of Rüm sacking Baghdad in 1258.



The great Mongol leader Genghis Khan, whose armies conquered most of Eurasia

1190



A 16th-century portrait of Philip II of France, who joined the Third Crusade alongside Richard the Lionheart

October 1187

France and England respond to Hattin

Aghast at the calamity of Hattin, new pope Gregory VIII calls on Christendom to repent of its sins. The greatest Christian rulers – including Philip II of France and Richard I of England – subsequently take crusading vows.

August 1191 –October 1192

The Third Crusade ends in truce

En route to Jerusalem, Richard's army defeats an attack by Saladin at Arsuf. The king decides Jerusalem cannot be held long-term, agrees a truce with Saladin and departs, having secured a key foothold in the Holy Land

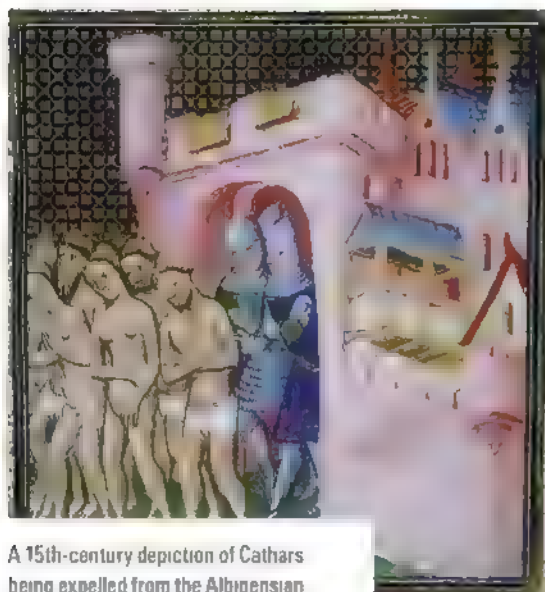
1198

A new leader for Christendom

The young, dynamic pope Innocent III is elected and spearheads a resurgence of the crusading movement – but the first phase ends in infamy when the Fourth Crusade diverts to Christian Constantinople, sacking the city in 1204

A 13th-century fresco of Pope Innocent III, who also directed crusades against Muslim Spain and heretics in France





A 15th-century depiction of Cathars being expelled from the Albigensian stronghold of Carcassonne, France

1209

Holy war at home

Fearing the spread of a dualist heresy known as 'Catharsism' in Languedoc, Innocent III proclaims the Albigensian Crusade, which begins in 1209. Simon de Montfort, 5th Earl of Leicester, is elected leader and will conquer swathes of the region in a brutal campaign.



A coin featuring Töregene Khatun, empress regent of the Mongols and mother of Güyük Khan

1245

The friars meet the Mongols

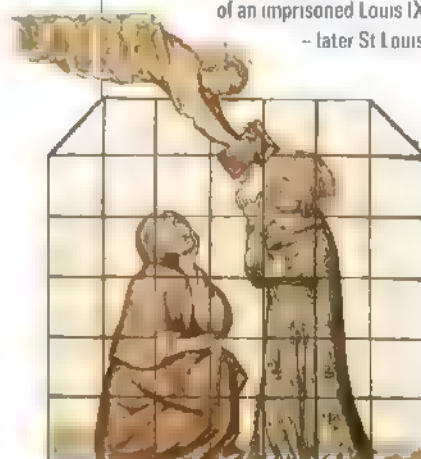
Pope Innocent IV sends an embassy of friars to the Mongols, hoping to forestall incursions into western Europe. The Franciscan emissary John of Plano Carpini writes up his account of their mission into the depths of the Mongol empire to meet the great khan Güyük (grandson of Genghis Khan).

1249–50

A king is captured

A further crusade, led by King Louis IX of France, lands in Egypt and captures Damietta, but Louis' forces are crushed at the battle of Al Mansurah in February 1250. In April, the survivors attempt to evacuate but, caught by Ayyubid forces, many are cut down and Louis himself is taken captive.

A 15th-century drawing of an imprisoned Louis IX – later St Louis



1210

1212

Crusader triumph in Spain

With Innocent's support, the kings of Castile, Aragon, Navarre and Portugal unite to battle the Almohads (a Berber Muslim dynasty) at Las Navas de Tolosa. Their eventual triumph marks a decisive victory for the *Reconquista* – the movement to reclaim the Iberian peninsula from Muslim rule.

1217–21

The chaotic Fifth Crusade

Innocent's successor, Honorius III, launches a planned crusade to the east, targeting Saladin's successors in Egypt – a dynasty known as the Ayyubids. The crusaders eventually take the port of Damietta but are caught in the Nile's annual flood as they advance inland towards Cairo, and are forced to surrender their gains.



A combination of bad luck, poor organisation and infighting put paid to the Fifth Crusade

Acre was the last major crusader stronghold in the kingdom of Jerusalem. Its fall in 1291 marked the end of attempts to take the Holy Land



Mamluk sultan Baybars took the Hospitallers' formidable Krak des Chevaliers after a 36-day siege

1271

An attempted assassination

Baybars captures the mighty fortress of Krak des Chevaliers from the Hospitallers, before a new crusade arrives led by the future Edward I of England. The heir to the throne only just survives an attempt on his life by one of Baybars' agents



1291

Acre falls

Throughout April and May, Khalil lays siege to Acre. The defenders are devastated by arrow storms, Greek fire (a type of incendiary weapon) and bombardment from Mamluk trebuchets, leading to the deaths of the Templar master and Hospitaller marshal. Khalil overruns the city, slaughtering and enslaving thousands and crushing the last remnant of the crusader states. **U**

1290

The scourge of the crusaders

With the death of Qalawun, his son Al-Ashraf Khalil takes command of the Mamluks and assumes the task of defeating the crusaders once and for all

1289

Qalawun takes Tripoli

Mamluk forces under sultan Qalawun capture the crusader city of Tripoli, slaughtering the inhabitants. Edward I of England responds to papal pleas for aid by sending a contingent to reinforce Acre, the last great crusading stronghold

Sophie Therèse Ambler is lecturer in medieval history and deputy director of the Centre for War and Diplomacy at Lancaster University. Her new book, *The Song of Simon de Montfort: England's First Revolutionary and the Death of Chivalry*, is published by Picador



The lion 'passant', or walking, was the heraldic blazon of Sultan Baybars I. Baybars' aggression was the beginning of the end for the crusaders

1260

The Mamluks counter the Mongol threat

The newly formed Mamluk sultanate, having seized power from the Ayyubids in Egypt, defeats the Mongols in battle at Ayn Jalut in Palestine. Baybars, leader of the army vanguard, becomes sultan and begins campaigns against the crusader states, taking Antioch in 1268



The fall of Tripoli to the Mamluks in April 1289 marked the end of 180 years of Christian rule

The city was razed and its residents enslaved or massacred

FAITH &

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An in-depth look at the events that kickstarted the first battle for Jerusalem

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Why cleansing your soul wasn't the only reason to strike out for the Holy Land

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Not all holy wars took place in the Middle East – or even involved Muslims

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How Simon de Montfort led a daring rebellion against the English crown



FIRE



Faith and fire The First Crusade

A fanciful engraving
imagines Peter the Hermit
presenting Pope Urban II
(centre) with a letter from
Simeon II, Patriarch of
Jerusalem, giving him
permission to preach a
crusade to the Holy Land



Launching the First Crusade

When Muslim power grew in the east, Pope Urban II called on the knights of Europe to defend the Holy Land. **Rebecca Rist** recounts a quest that devolved into massacres, treachery and greed



“When Pope Urban had said these and very many similar things in his urbane discourse, he so influenced to one purpose the desires of all who were present that they cried out, ‘It is the will of God! It is the will of God!’”

So wrote the monk Robert of Rheims in his *Historia Hierosolymitana* (‘History of Jerusalem’) during the early 1100s. Some years earlier, on 27 November 1095, Urban II preached a public sermon outside the town of Clermont in central France, summoning Christians to take part in the First Crusade, a new form of holy war. It was a carefully stage-managed event, in which the pope’s representative, the papal legate Adhémar of Le Puy, supposedly moved by the pope’s eloquence, tore up strips of cloth to make crosses for the crowds. Urban had been travelling through France accompanied by a large entourage from Italy, dedicating cathedrals and churches and presiding over reforming councils, and his proposed crusade was part of a wider programme of church reform. In March that year, at the Council of Piacenza, a desperate Byzantine emperor, Alexius I Comnenus, had pleaded for western help against the Seljuk Turks, whose conquests were decimating Byzantium and preventing Christians from reaching pilgrimage sites. Urban wanted to extend the hand of friendship to the Orthodox church and to heal the schism with Catholicism, which had gone from bad to worse since the time of his predecessor Leo IX.

We have a number of accounts of Urban’s speech, contemporary and later, although they differ somewhat in what they record. Yet we know that he called on knights to vow to fight in a penitential pilgrimage on Christ’s behalf, in a war to defend the Holy Land from Muslim oppressors, and that he used the Christian symbol of the cross as an emotive sign of commitment to the enterprise. Urban promised the crowds that crusading would not just benefit the church and European Christian society but their own souls, since all sins, past and present, would be wiped away through his dramatic promise of the ‘remission of sins’.

Of course, those who responded to his call were inspired by a range of motives beyond the religious: material, economic, political, social and cultural. Nevertheless, they were drawn to Urban’s vision of a military campaign that soldered together ideas of pilgrimage, holy war and just war.



Urban promised the crowds that crusading would wipe away all sins, past and present



A knight’s cross from the First Crusade. The cross became an emotive sign of commitment to fight

For would-be crusaders, the religious and political situation of 11th-century Europe was complex and confusing. In Rome, popes were trying to reform the Church, beset by problems of simony (the buying and selling of ecclesiastical office), Nicolaitanism (clerical marriage) and the need to reform monasticism. These drives for reform, particularly over the issue of investiture – who had the right to invest the clergy with their spiritual office – had caused great divisions between the papacy and the Holy Roman Empire, and chaos in Europe.

Indeed, though embryonic nation states had begun to emerge in Germany, France, England and the Iberian peninsula, led by powerful dynasties such as the Norman, Capetian and Salian kings, Europe was still a fractured, violent place of lawlessness, hardship, civil war and famine. It is easy to see why Urban’s crusading message appealed to the knightly classes: it gave many the opportunity to harness the military skills in which they had been trained for a greater, religious cause. Furthermore, a resurgence of millennial fervour was now gripping many Christians, who believed that the end of the world was at hand and wanted to seize the opportunity of a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to witness the Last Days. Urban’s speech sparked a wave of recruitment in which those who took the cross were promised a



Charismatic preacher Peter the Hermit urges warriors on to the Holy Land, in a c1270 image of the First Crusade's disastrous opening sally, the People's Crusade

host of special privileges including protection of their families, lands and assets and exemption from repaying debts while they were absent on crusade.

Onward, Christian soldiers

Nevertheless, most westerners knew little of the situation in the Holy Land that Urban believed sparked the need for a crusade. For centuries, the Muslim world had been divided between two major caliphates: the Abbasid at Baghdad (modern-day Iraq), which espoused Sunni Islam, and the Fatimid caliphate at Cairo, which followed Shia Islam. In 1009, the Holy Sepulchre, which housed the tomb of Christ himself, had been vandalised by the Fatimid caliph al-Hakim, who led a campaign of persecution and prevented pilgrims journeying to Jerusalem. In recent decades, the Byzantines had also been troubled by a new wave of aggressors: the Seljuk Turks, against whom they had suffered a cataclysmic defeat at the battle of Manzikert in 1071. Alexius I's ambassadors were present at the Council of Piacenza in March 1095. Relations had been rocky in recent years between east and west, not least because a former pope, Gregory VII, had formally excommunicated the Byzantine emperor. Urban listened carefully to the ambassadors' appeal from Alexius to western knights to help him restore lost

Byzantine territory, and planned his speech for Clermont accordingly. He might well have had in mind that Gregory VII had earlier also issued (unsuccessful) appeals to help Byzantium.

So Urban II had appealed to the knightly classes of medieval Europe. But the result was not what he had anticipated. His promise of 'remission of sins', together with the hope of material gain, was so popular that huge crowds of peasants began to dedicate themselves to the cause, incited by charismatic, itinerant and determined preachers such as the persuasive Peter the Hermit and the dubious Walter the Penniless. From the spring of 1096, disorderly mobs began to journey across Europe in what came to be called the People's, or Peasants', Crusade. These groups travelled across Germany and Hungary, often clashing with Hungarians and Byzantine mercenaries, yet met outside Constantinople, relatively intact, at the end of July 1096.

Alexius was dismayed at the disorderly rabble that had appeared. These were not the fearsome western Christian knights he had hoped for! He advised Peter the Hermit to await the arrival of the better-armed main contingents, but was not heeded.

At the beginning of August, many crossed the Bosphorus and marched towards the city of Nicomedia (modern Izmit). Some, Germans and Italians led by a nobleman named Reinald, captured the castle of Xerigordos before being besieged by Muslim forces and taken captive, or dying of heat and thirst. Others, without their leader, Peter, who had returned to Constantinople, marched out of Civetot, were ambushed by the Turks, and captured. By October 1096, the People's Crusade was over.

Luckily for Alexius, from late 1096 onwards more effective military forces in the shape of the Princes' Crusade began to arrive outside Constantinople. These warriors, some more reluctantly than others, swore an oath of allegiance to him before crossing into Asia Minor, accompanied by Byzantine forces. No kings took the cross, but there was an illustrious list of nobility, including the pious Godfrey of Bouillon, Duke of Lower Lorraine; his pragmatic brother Baldwin I; the handsome Bohemond I, son of Robert Guiscard; his nephew Tancred; as well as Raymond IV, Count of Toulouse; Robert II, Duke of Normandy; Robert II, Count of Flanders; Hugh the Great of Vermandois, brother of the King of France; and Stephen of Blois, brother-in-law of the King of England. All hoped for penance, glory, adventure and land.

ANTI-SEMITISM AND THE PEOPLE'S CRUSADE

How mob fervour led to forced baptism and murder

The first wave of the First Crusade, the People's Crusade of 1096, was a mixture of peasants and knights led by dynamic and persuasive rabble-rousers such as Peter the Hermit, Walter the Penniless, Count Emicho of Leiningen, the priest Volkmar, and the monk Gottschalk.

Although many of these crusaders got no further than the Balkans, they often took part in ferocious persecution of Jews, particularly in the Rhineland, in towns such as Cologne, Mainz, Speyer and Worms, but also in France, Hungary, Bavaria and Bohemia, where they sacked Jewish quarters, massacred the inhabitants and destroyed whole communities. Some tried forcibly to baptise Jews, despite the fact that forced baptism was contrary to canon law.

In response, some Jews preferred to martyr themselves – the practice of *Kiddush ha-Shem* ('sanctifying the Name of God') – and even their own children rather than be forced to convert. We know of these forced baptisms and massacres not only from Catholic sources but also from Jewish writers, who recorded in Hebrew chronicles what happened, to record the atrocities for posterity and to keep their faith alive.

The reasons for these massacres were manifold. Whipped up by crusading rhetoric and fervour, mob armies were likely to become disorganised, unruly and predisposed to violence. Since they had taken the cross to kill Muslim 'infidels', they may have thought it was their duty to kill other 'infidels' – the Jews – whom they encountered, not only in the near east, but in Europe, in their very midst.

These ideas were enhanced by the belief that it was the Jews who had killed Christ, whose death it was the crusaders' duty to avenge. Hence, in committing these atrocities, the crusaders may have been driven by ideas of purification, vengeance and a desire to scapegoat an 'other'.

The first target the crusaders besieged was the Turkish-held town of Nicaea. Its governor, Kiliç Arslan, immediately fled the scene and his attempt to gather a relief force was unsuccessful. The town surrendered in June 1097 – but to the Byzantines, to the crusaders' dismay. Manuel Butumites, the crafty Byzantine commander, had struck a deal with the Turks that restored Nicaea to Alexius. The westerners were far from happy, but there was nothing they could do about it. Meanwhile, Kiliç Arslan waited in the nearby hills and attacked Bohemond's forces at Dorylaeum. After a hard-fought victory, the crusaders opened a strategic road to Antioch, and through cooperation with another Byzantine leader, Tatikios, soon won back many towns – but for Alexius.

This was not at all to Baldwin and Tancred's taste, and they split off from the main contingent to carve out territories for themselves. After the pair quarrelled, however, Tancred rejoined the main army while Baldwin marched north to the town of Edessa. Although its citizens made him joint ruler with their own lord, Thoros, Baldwin staged a coup and the county of Edessa became the first crusader state.

Meanwhile, the main body of crusaders reached and besieged the city of Antioch in October 1097. Its siege lasted months, and low morale deepened still further. Finally, after Bohemond persuaded a traitor to open the gates to the crusaders, the city fell in June 1098 and its inhabitants were massacred. Almost immediately, the crusaders were themselves besieged by a new Muslim army led by the formidable Kerbogha, the atabeg of Mosul. In dismay, Alexius and other Christian deserters, including Stephen of Blois, returned to Constantinople. The morale of the army was only saved by the discovery of the Holy Lance – which supposedly had pierced Christ's side – by a peasant-soldier named Peter Bartholomew in the Church of St Peter. This supposed relic was certainly fake, but it gave the army's mood a vital boost. The crusaders marched out of Antioch and routed the Muslims in a famous victory. Bohemond, who by now had no intention of marching onwards to Jerusalem, seized control of the city and established the principality of Antioch.

Territorial armies

Nevertheless, with the death of the papal legate Adhémar of Le Puy, who had kept the crusader armies together, relations between Byzantines and crusaders could only worsen. The latter continued their march to Jerusalem and, led by Raymond IV of Toulouse, laid siege to the town of Arqa in the spring of 1099. On reaching Jerusalem,



A depiction of the siege of Antioch in 1098. Amid a food shortage, the invaders' morale dipped to dangerous lows before Bohemond I persuaded a traitor to open the gates. The inhabitants were slaughtered.

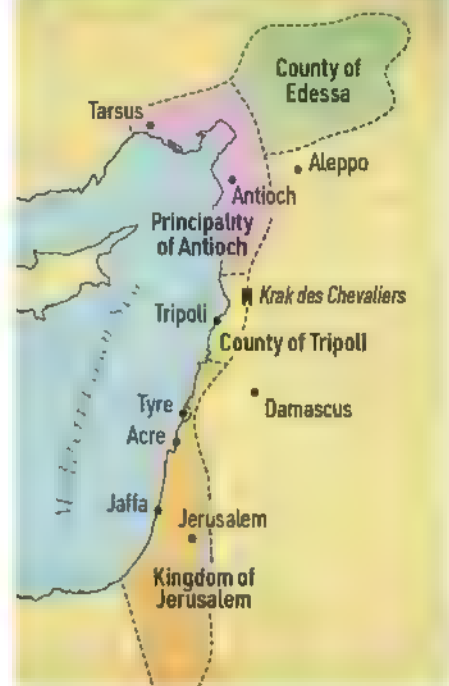
they besieged that too, and on 15 July Godfrey of Bouillon and his troops entered the city, slaughtering the inhabitants. The anonymous *Gesta Francorum* ('Deeds of the Franks'), described how: "Rejoicing and weeping for joy, our people came to the Sepulchre of Jesus our saviour to worship and pay their debt."

Yet the capture of Jerusalem did not bring harmony. Godfrey and Raymond argued over who now owned the city. Eventually, Godfrey was declared 'defender of the Holy Sepulchre', and rallied his crusaders to defeat an Egyptian counter-invasion force, which was repulsed on 12 August near the coastal town of Ascalon. The kingdom of

Starstruck by the exploits of their illustrious predecessors, new armies arrived to support the crusader states



Crusader states during the early 12th century



Jerusalem was born. Raymond had lost the ultimate prize, and had to content himself with carving out land to the north of Jerusalem, which became known as the county of Tripoli.

So, through their combined endeavours, western crusaders had managed to create four distinct territories in the east which together formed the crusader states: the county of Edessa, the principality of Antioch, the county of Tripoli and the kingdom of Jerusalem. Godfrey was succeeded by his brother Baldwin, who took the title 'King of Jerusalem'. Many knights now went home, but Urban II had already commissioned the archbishop of Milan to preach the cross anew in Lombardy, and in 1100 new recruitment drives began in France and Germany. After Urban's death, papal successors such as Paschal II (1099–1118) and Calixtus II (1119–1124) continued to encourage crusaders to travel to the near east with great 'encyclicals' (papal letters) distributed far and wide. Starstruck by the exploits of their illustrious predecessors, new armies arrived to support the crusader states, which then saw the imposition of western European culture on eastern indigenous peoples including Muslims, Greeks and Jews.

During the 12th and 13th centuries, popes continued to call for the defence of the crusader states, and to issue the plenary indulgence – a remission of the temporal punishment owed for sin – for crusading in



The crusaders engage with the Fatimids of Egypt at the battle of Ascalon on 12 August 1099, having captured Jerusalem a few weeks earlier. Their victory on that day effectively ended the First Crusade.

the east. Their calls resulted in large-scale expeditions such as the Second Crusade, which aimed to recover Edessa; the Third Crusade to recover Jerusalem; the Fourth Crusade, which sacked Constantinople and established the Latin empire; the Fifth Crusade to Egypt; and the two crusades of Louis IX. They also indirectly inspired countless smaller expeditions, including

grassroots, 'popular' crusades. None were as successful as the First. Nevertheless, from 1099 onwards, the crusader states, despite gradual loss of territory, continued in one form or other until the last crusader stronghold of Acre fell in 1291, marking the end of the 'golden age' of crusading.

Also as a result of the First Crusade's success, popes began to call for crusades in other theatres of war. These included crusades against Muslims in the Iberian peninsula as part of the *Reconquista*, and against non-Muslim opponents, such as the Baltic crusades against pagan peoples, the Albigensian Crusades in the south of France against Cathar heretics, and 'political crusades' against enemies of the papal states. Crusades widened to become any holy wars authorised against heretics, pagans and enemies of the papacy for which crusaders took vows and gained special privileges. Furthermore, from the 14th to the 18th centuries, popes continued to call for crusades against Turks and Ottomans to protect Christian Europe. Although the crusades were originally a medieval phenomenon, their legacy lived on. ■

Rebecca Rist is professor of medieval history at the University of Reading. Her books include *The Papacy and Crusading in Europe, 1198–1245* (Bloomsbury, 2009).

“Religious war isn’t an irrational act, and we shouldn’t dismiss it as irrational”

Christopher Tyerman talks to *BBC History Magazine* about the process of manning, planning and executing a crusade – and argues that their complexity reveals much about the rational minds at work in the Middle Ages



A 15th-century depiction of fighting during the First Crusade. "The reality of trying to organise an army was exactly the same as any other period," says Christopher Tyerman

BBC History Magazine: The crusades were massive military enterprises involving thousands of people. Who answered the call to go?

Christopher Tyerman: The social reach was very broad. There were the military elites, the urban elites, military households and those from the wider community who had been recruited to fight as infantry. Beyond that, there's evidence of modest farmers, urban and rural artisans and rich peasants, all of whom could hope to earn some money on crusade. And poor peasants could have gone, but would have needed someone else's funds. So it was socially quite embracing – not just knights and soldiers.

Women went too: lists of crusaders from the late 12th century feature around 10 per cent women. Some were wives, but others went by themselves or in groups – in other words, they weren't chaperoned. Some rich women even hired groups of soldiers to take with them, so they were very powerful. The involvement of society as a whole, women as well as men, is very revealing about wider social structures.

What techniques were used to try to get people to go on crusade?

It was a multimedia activity. Firstly, there was a written side: campaigns would start

with papal letters being sent out, as well as newsletters and doctored eyewitness accounts of some atrocity that they wanted to advertise to stimulate attention. There was also a visual aspect: during the Third Crusade, preachers went around with big posters on canvases depicting Saladin and his horse crapping on the holy sepulchre, or pictures of Muhammad beating up Christ.

There were also sermons, which were big theatrical performances. You assembled a crowd who knew what to expect, in the same way that you know what to expect when you go to a pop concert. The preacher would be on the stage, using props and an array of oratorical and theatrical tricks. Most of the sensory perceptions were involved, and the message was a universal one: salvation,

The involvement of society as a whole, women as well as men, is very revealing about wider social structures

duty, necessity. It was carefully constructed to generate the maximum effect.

People signed up for various reasons. You could commit to go because you believed that it was the right thing to do, as people believed that fighting against the Nazis or Napoleon was the right thing to do. So it could be an ideological, emotional commitment. But it was also seen as a respectable thing to do. You were fulfilling your role in society, your cultural obligation. Your reputation would have been enhanced by going on crusade, with benefits for your material standing. So the pressures on lords were social and cultural as much as religious.

If you were employed, of course, you went – you were an employee, your livelihood depended on your lord and you went with him. You may have believed in it, you may not. This idea that everything was spontaneous is something commentators projected for religious reasons, but the reality of trying to organise an army was exactly the same as in any other period: you needed resources, leadership, social structures and so on.

The crusades took place over a huge area. What effect did this have on the way they were planned and managed?

Coordination was extremely difficult – but it was achieved. Deadlines were set for

when people left, and muster points were set at particular times. There were rounds of diplomacy, with endless letters going to and fro preparing for markets and contracts with shippers. We know that the Third Crusade took Germany a year to prepare for and a year to get to the Holy Land. Interestingly, in 1190, Richard I prepaid his soldiers' wages, and took the money with him to pay them for the next year. And, hey presto, they got to the Holy Land at the end of that year.

So there was practical intelligence and planning, and people arrived in a fairly coordinated way. This was partly because there were only two seasons in which people could get to the Holy Land by sea, but it was not done by coincidence or chance. There was a pattern to these campaigns, based on networks of communication founded on lordship patterns, regional, monastic and trade links, and connections between towns. These communities came together because they already had contact.

How did the crusaders find their way?

Well, they knew where they were going. Not initially, perhaps, in the way that we would, by using maps, but through their version of satnav: people – veterans and locals who told them where to go. When you look at itineraries you see they were organised in a linear way from town to town, like satnav. They were diagrammatic maps just like that of the London Underground.

The idea that they set off over the horizon not knowing where to go is a modern myth. There's plenty of evidence that they were using maps by the end of the 13th century, and there are written accounts of journeys to the Holy Land that specify in which direction to go and how many days it would take.

How did crusaders go about providing medical care?

The idea that medieval medicine was a form of licence to assault and murder is untrue. Crusaders took doctors with them on the Fifth Crusade, for instance, and provisions were made for nursing. Not all wounds were fatal, and you needed to save people's lives if they had injuries, look after your wounded, and bury your dead. This is true of any army, and was also true during the crusades.

Obviously the treatment was hit and miss, but there was an understanding of how to treat wounds. You can tell this from surviving skeletons that wounds have healed and so couldn't have been fatal. Contrary to the beliefs of some, these weren't clods inspired by crude superstition, credulously



Medieval medical treatment could be hit and miss, but doctors were skilled at treating wounds and accompanied the fighters on the Fifth Crusade

The idea that the crusaders set off over the horizon not knowing where they were going is a modern myth

following some bogus spiritual ideal. Well, to our eyes the ideal may have been bogus, but they thought it through rationally. It had to be explained to them: if the cause of a crusade wasn't convincing, people didn't join up. This was not an obedient society, but a questioning one. The medical care shows that we should take these people seriously: these were serious people, doing their best to confront serious problems.

Are there any characters who have been particularly overlooked?

I think that the unsung are the mass of the crusaders. The physical conditions of going on crusade weren't pleasant. One shouldn't get sentimental about this, but the common experience of the common person going on crusade was, shall we say, strenuous. There were things to compensate for this, such as the camaraderie, but it was often tough.

My reaction – and you see this in a lot of historians who write about the crusades – is somewhat split. On the one hand, you have to acknowledge the crusaders' intellectual and physical effort and psychological stamina. Yet I think that their actions are to some extent characteristic of a very

different society from ours. There's no point in historians even considering whether or not the crusades were a good thing or a bad thing. That seems to me to be sloppy self-indulgence, a condescending judgmentalism of the worst sort, which doesn't help us understand the historical reality. These were real people motivated by very different impulses, even if those impulses are, to me at any rate, repulsive in many ways: the violence, the intolerance, the assumption of religious, racial and moral superiority. Those things were all shared by the other side, of course.

One can't escape from the victims, and any attempt to see the crusades in terms of either moral superiority or moral inferiority of western Europe, or in simplistic debates about the 'clash of civilisations', seems to me to be entirely fruitless and historically incorrect.

The excitement of history is to engage with people who were different, not the same, but nonetheless led real lives. We can't know all about them, or much about them in many ways, but we don't owe them judgment – we owe them understanding.

How do you think people's views of the crusades, and this period more generally, are in need of an update?

People put the wars of faith into a category of either admiration or lunacy, or they see them as being alien. These weren't alien activities, so it's important to set the crusades in a more explicable, believable context.

The Middle Ages was a time of rationality. The condescension that somehow we're above superstition now is just wrong: we have homeopathic medicine, for God's sake!

People did things for rational reasons, and worried about things as we do. Life was difficult, and they came up with rational solutions, whether it was building scaffolding or worrying, as King Amalric of Jerusalem did, if there was any evidence outside the Bible for Jesus's resurrection. They were asking serious questions about their world as we do: yes, they were doing it with a different knowledge base, but they were still asking questions based on reason and rationality.

We can then turn the lens back and look at ourselves and say that, if religious war is not an irrational act, we shouldn't dismiss it as such in the 21st century. It is rational, and we must therefore use reason to combat it. **II** Interview by Matt Elton

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Christopher Tyerman is professor of the history of the crusades at the University of Oxford. His latest book is *The World of the Crusades: An Illustrated History* (Yale University Press, 2019)

CRUSADE SUPER HEROES

Legends were woven around fighters of the First Crusade to persuade knights to take up arms again. It was a medieval propaganda masterclass, writes **Jonathan Phillips**



Godfrey of Bouillon leads a company of knights in this 14th/15th-century depiction of the First Crusade

On Easter Sunday 1146, the most important nobles and churchmen in France gathered on a hillside below the beautiful abbey church of Vézelay in northern Burgundy. A rough wooden stage had been set up (the crowd was too big to fit in the church), and sitting there, already bearing the sign of the cross, were King Louis VII of France and his wife, Eleanor of Aquitaine. Yet the royal couple were not the star attractions of this pious congregation. The centre of attention was, in fact, a short, frail man, undernourished due to fasting and abstinence. Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux, was the most charismatic orator of the age and he began a passionate speech to recruit warriors for the Second Crusade. He urged the knighthood of France to fulfil their Christian duty to help defend the Holy Land from the Muslims. His message was clear and direct: "What are you doing, you mighty men of valour? ... I call blessed the generation that can seize an opportunity of such rich indulgence as this... Mighty soldiers, you have a cause for which you can fight without danger to your souls: a cause in which to conquer is glorious and for which to die is gain."

Bernard's appeal received a rapturous reception from the crowd. Next he played his trump card, reading out a papal bull – a formal appeal for a crusade from Pope Eugenius III. Its effect was immediate. As one contemporary wrote: "When Heaven's instrument poured forth the dew of the divine word, with a loud outcry, people from every side began to demand crosses." The audience surged forwards to have a cloth cross pinned to their shoulder as a mark of their commitment. There was a near disaster as the stage collapsed, but miraculously (of course) no one was injured. So many wanted to join the crusade that Bernard's supply of crosses ran out and the abbot was forced to tear up his own cloak to make more.

Over the next few months, preachers toured Europe reading out Eugenius's and Bernard's letters in a carefully orchestrated effort to incite people to support the crusade. In the remainder of 1146 and into the spring of 1147, tens of thousands of people joined the expedition. With the benefit of hindsight, the campaign to the Holy Land was an abject failure. Yet in terms of recruitment, at least, it was hugely successful. What sparked such tremendous enthusiasm? Part of the reason was undoubtedly

There was tremendous pressure on knights to live up to the deeds of their forefathers and not disgrace themselves

Bernard's brilliant preaching, yet Pope Eugenius's message was also enormously seductive – and the essence of his approach is revealed in the opening lines of his text: "We have learned from what men of old have said and we have found written in their histories how greatly our predecessors worked for the liberation of the eastern church."

Eugenius's rhetoric focused on the success of the First Crusade, 50 years previously, acknowledging the importance of written texts and conjuring notions of honour and shame. The pope employed carefully calculated language to make his appeal: "We recognise how great the danger is that threatens the church of God and all Christianity... It will be seen as a great token of nobility and uprightness if those things acquired by the efforts of your fathers are vigorously defended by you, their good sons. But if, God forbid, it comes to pass differently, then the bravery of the fathers will have proved to be diminished in the sons." Contemporary knights could be in little doubt as to what these words meant – there was tremendous pressure on them not to fall short of the achievements of their forefathers and bring disgrace upon themselves. Eugenius had chosen to exploit the

legacy of the First Crusade, a legacy sustained and embellished as no prior event in medieval Europe had been before.

It is hard to imagine today the feelings of delight and amazement that rippled across Europe after the armies of the First Crusade captured Jerusalem in 1099. While the victory was ascribed to divine approval, it also created instant heroes of those who took part in the triumph. In a society that placed immense value on military prowess – these were among the formative decades of the age of chivalry – to secure such a result (a four-year expedition, 3,000 miles from home, against fierce opponents in an unknown land) was truly remarkable. When combined with the fact that this was achieved in the service of God, it formed a highly potent concept.

The splendour of their courage

One consequence of this was an unprecedented blossoming of historical writing – no previous episode had so caught the imagination of people across the Latin west and inspired them to write about it. The Norman conquest, for example, had prompted a couple of narratives, but little detailed treatment outside north-western Europe. Because of the international nature of its armies and the fact that the recovery of the Holy City mattered to all Christians, the First Crusade was a Europe-wide phenomenon. Robert of Rheims wrote a popular chronicle in c1106–07, which related: "Since the creation of the world what more miraculous undertaking has there been (other than the mystery of the redeeming cross) than what was achieved in our own time by this journey of our own people to Jerusalem? ... And so it deserves to be publicised through a faithful account as much as to those living, as to now, as for future generations, so that through it, Christians' hope in God may be strengthened."

At the root of this literary outpouring was a work now known as the *Gesta Francorum*, a short, anonymous eyewitness account of the crusade that was circulated widely in Europe. This dramatic piece vividly conveyed the hardships and determination of the crusaders. At the centre of the story lay Bohemond of Taranto, the first Prince of Antioch, who, as we will see, gained a towering reputation. Then there were the reports of the surviving crusaders who had returned home. They were welcomed as heroes, feted with processions and ceremonies – and they, of course, told of their deeds to the writers.

Within a decade, a first generation of texts had been created in northern and southern France, the Rhineland,

Mary appears to Bernard of Clairvaux in a 14th-century depiction by Giovanni da Milano



A c15th-century manuscript showing Bernard of Clairvaux preaching before King Louis VII





A 15th-century painting depicts the combined Christian armies besieging Damascus during the Second Crusade

Dissension, derision and defeat

THE SECOND CRUSADE (1147–49)

In December 1144, the Christian city of Edessa fell to Zengi of Mosul. This was by far the most serious defeat yet for the crusader states, and messengers appealed to Europe for help. The efforts of Pope Eugenius III and Bernard of Clairvaux caused many thousands to enlist, including King Louis VII of France and King Conrad III of Germany – the first time major European monarchs risked joining such an expedition. Western Europe was inflamed with crusading zeal and further theatres of war were opened against the pagans of the Baltic region and the Muslims of Spain – marking an extraordinarily confident and aggressive movement of Christian expansionism.

In the summer of 1147, the main armies marched into the Byzantine empire. There, as on the First Crusade, relations with the Greeks were tense, although there was no major confrontation. Once into Asia Minor in October 1147, Conrad hurried on ahead, only for his army to be decimated by the forces of the Seljuk Turks. Louis proceeded more cautiously, but in January 1148 his army was routed on Mount Cadmus. The remainder of his troops struggled on to Antioch, where it is alleged that Eleanor of Aquitaine had an affair with her uncle, Prince Raymond. In the summer of 1148, the

combined Christian armies laid siege to Damascus but the fear of Muslim relief forces caused them to retreat without even fighting a major battle – an enormous humiliation to the Christians and a massive boost to the cause of the jihad.

In the meantime, crusaders from England and the Rhineland had decided to sail to the Holy Land. En route, they joined with King Afonso Henriques of Portugal to recapture Lisbon from the Muslims in October 1147. In eastern Iberia, Genoese fleets combined with the king of León-Castile to take the city of Almería in the same month and, the following year, the Genoese and the count of Barcelona took Tortosa. In the autumn of 1147, a group of Saxon nobles and bishops had joined forces with the Danes to try to push the frontiers of Christianity eastwards against the pagan tribes of northern Europe. Dissension within the army and tough resistance meant that it did not succeed. In sum, then, other than in Iberia, the Second Crusade was a failure. Its dismal outcome surprised and horrified the Christian west. As one contemporary wrote, it had done “irreparable harm to the Christian faith”. Another derided it as having achieved “nothing useful or worth repeating”.

Bavaria, Italy and Spain. Under the overarching framework of God’s guiding hand, the deeds of the holy warriors came to the fore: “No matter how much the terrible glint of [enemy] arms glittered from innumerable columns, the splendour of their courage would still outdo it if it were visible. They march out to fight with one mind – not to flee but to die, or win.”

Everyone who had taken part in the campaign wanted their role to be immortalised, and families had a huge sense of pride in the achievements of individuals of their clan. The standing of Godfrey of Bouillon, for example, was immense. He had been one of the greatest warriors on the expedition, said to have cloven a man in half (from side to side), leaving his horse to gallop away still carrying the legs and lower torso. Whether such stories were true or not is, in some ways, irrelevant – they were told and retold and formed part of the legend of the expedition.

Another prominent figure in the First Crusade narratives was Bohemond, probably the leading military figure on the campaign. The *Gesta Francorum* described him in battle as “a lion which has been starving for three or four days, which comes roaring out of its cave... and falls upon the flocks careless for its own safety”.

A visit to the west enhanced Bohemond’s reputation even further. He had been held prisoner by the Muslims between 1100–03, but once freed he returned to Europe to seek support for a new crusade. With advance publicity carefully arranged by his cousin, he arrived in France in 1106 to a rapturous reception – in effect, a victory tour. Crowds flocked to hear him tell of his exploits and eyewitnesses reported that many asked him to be godfather to their children. Bohemond suddenly became a popular name, as one contemporary wrote: “Afterwards the name became famous in the furthest corners of the world.” The prince had grown up in Norman Sicily, but his father had passed over him in the line of succession. Yet in the aftermath of the First Crusade, such was the crusader’s standing that the King of France was happy to offer Bohemond the hand in marriage of his eldest daughter – not a bad step forward.

The recording and retelling of the First Crusade was not just a passing phase. The second and third decades of the 12th century saw the production of further accounts of the expedition and, if anything, the warriors of 1099 were treated with even greater reverence. In his extremely popular *Gesta Regum Anglorum* (‘Deeds of the Kings of England’), written in the 1120s, William of Malmesbury described “... leaders of high renown, to whose praises posterity will



A 13th-century depiction of Prince Bohemond sailing to France to marry King Philip I's daughter

assign no limits; heroes who from the cold of uttermost Europe plunged into the intolerable heat of the east, careless of their own lives, if only they could bring help to Christendom in its hour of trial... Let poets with their eulogies now give place, and fabled history no longer laud the heroes of antiquity. Nothing to be compared with their glory has ever been begotten in any age. Such valour as the ancients had vanished after their death into dust and ashes in the grave, for it was spent on the mirage of worldly splendour rather than on the solid aim of some goodly purpose; while of these brave heroes of ours, men will enjoy the benefit and tell the proud story, as long as the round world endures and the holy church of Christ flourishes."

Surpassing the titans

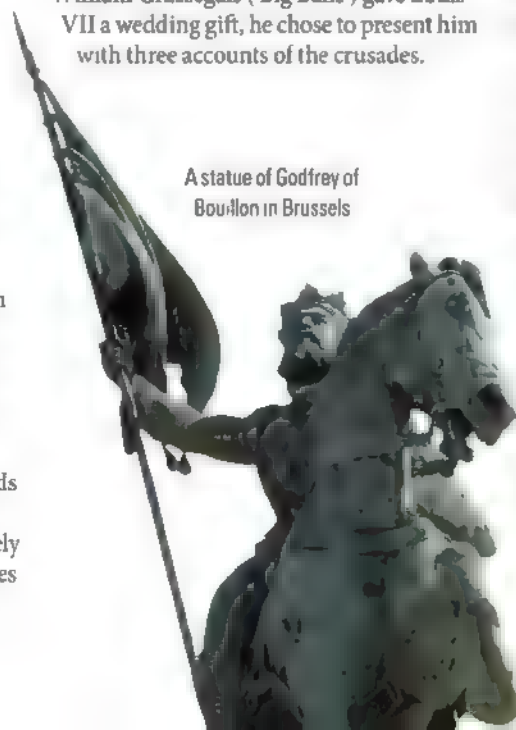
As well as demonstrating that medieval people did not believe the world to be flat, this passage is interesting because it shows the First Crusaders stepping up and surpassing the heroes of antiquity – titans such as Alexander and Achilles who, prior to 1099, had been the benchmark for bravery. With the capture of Jerusalem, medieval Europe had generated its own heroes – good Christian knights, whose claims to glory could be amplified and enhanced. This eye to the future is shown in William of Malmesbury's epitaph for Count Baldwin of Boulogne, another hero of the First Crusade: "His astonishing and almost superhuman courage [was] an inspiration to his contemporaries, just as it will be the admiration of posterity."

It was not just in narratives that the deeds of the crusaders were recorded. Literacy levels were limited, so these tales were widely circulated through song. Knights and nobles would gather in their halls and listen to

minstrels and troubadours perform epics such as the *Chanson d'Antioche* and the *Chanson de Jérusalem*, pieces that championed the bravery of the crusaders. As the former urged:

*"Be still my lords, leave off your chatter now,
If you want to hear a glorious song be sung
No jongleur ever sang a better song;
Hold this song in your heart and love it deep,
It tells of a story great, and of brave men.
You ought to love this song and hold it dear;
In it you'll find examples of brave men
And other things you'll need to keep in mind."*

By the Second Crusade, such stories were one reason why the idea of crusading was so firmly established in the consciousness of the Christian west. The perceived values of a crusader – piety, devotion to a cause and bravery – were held out as exemplars of behaviour. When, in 1137, the French knight William Grassegals ('Big Balls') gave Louis VII a wedding gift, he chose to present him with three accounts of the crusades.



A statue of Godfrey of Bouillon in Brussels



Bishops are shown urging crusaders forward in this 14th-century manuscript

Everyone who had taken part in the First Crusade wanted their role in the campaign to be immortalised

Tellingly, William had the collection inscribed thus: "...you might look at this book with the eye of reason as if in a mirror image of your ancestors... and you might follow in their footsteps on the path of virtue".

So when Pope Eugenius III called upon those wishing to enlist in the Second Crusade to emulate the past, he chose to tap into an immense seam of collective memory and pride, carefully polished over time, that gave the generation of 1146–48 a sense that it was imperative they should live up to the achievements of their ancestors. Indeed, in the course of the expedition, some decisions about the route of the army were dictated by the need to (literally) follow in the footsteps of their fathers.

Ultimately, overconfidence was the primary factor in the military misjudgments that caused the collapse of the Second Crusade. To a generation who left western Europe with the deeds of their heroic forefathers ringing in their ears, defeat was a concept they had given little thought to. While invoking the legacy of the First Crusade may have proven a wonderful recruitment tool, with hindsight, the sense of utter conviction that victory was assured turned out to be a fatal weakness for the warriors of its successor ■

Jonathan Phillips is professor of crusading history at Royal Holloway, University of London. His books include *Holy Warriors: A Modern History of the Crusades* (Vintage, 2010) and *The Crusades, 1095–1204* (Routledge, 2014)

FAT CATS OF THE CRUSADES

Waging holy war could be a lucrative business. **Dan Jones** tells the story of the crusaders who returned from the front line with their souls cleansed – and their pockets full

Bountiful battle

Crusaders defeat the Turks at Dorylaeum in 1097, as shown in a 14th-century illumination. While the victors may have believed that their triumph had earned them a place in heaven, it benefited them materially as well: they were soon looting the Turkish camp and plundering the bodies of the dead





On the morning of 1 July 1097, tens of thousands of Christian pilgrim soldiers of the First Crusade scrambled to make a desperate stand against a horde

of advancing Turkish horsemen. The crusaders were only a few days into a three-month march through 800 miles of hostile terrain when the Turks took them by surprise, attacking early in the morning while the crusaders were still in camp, near an old Roman settlement in Anatolia called Dorylaeum. One eyewitness to the battle, a French priest called Fulcher of Chartres, recalled the terror he felt when the Turks descended, as he and his companions "huddled together like sheep in a fold, trembling and frightened". The fighting raged for six hours until eventually – miraculously – it became clear that the Turks did not have the numbers to prevail.

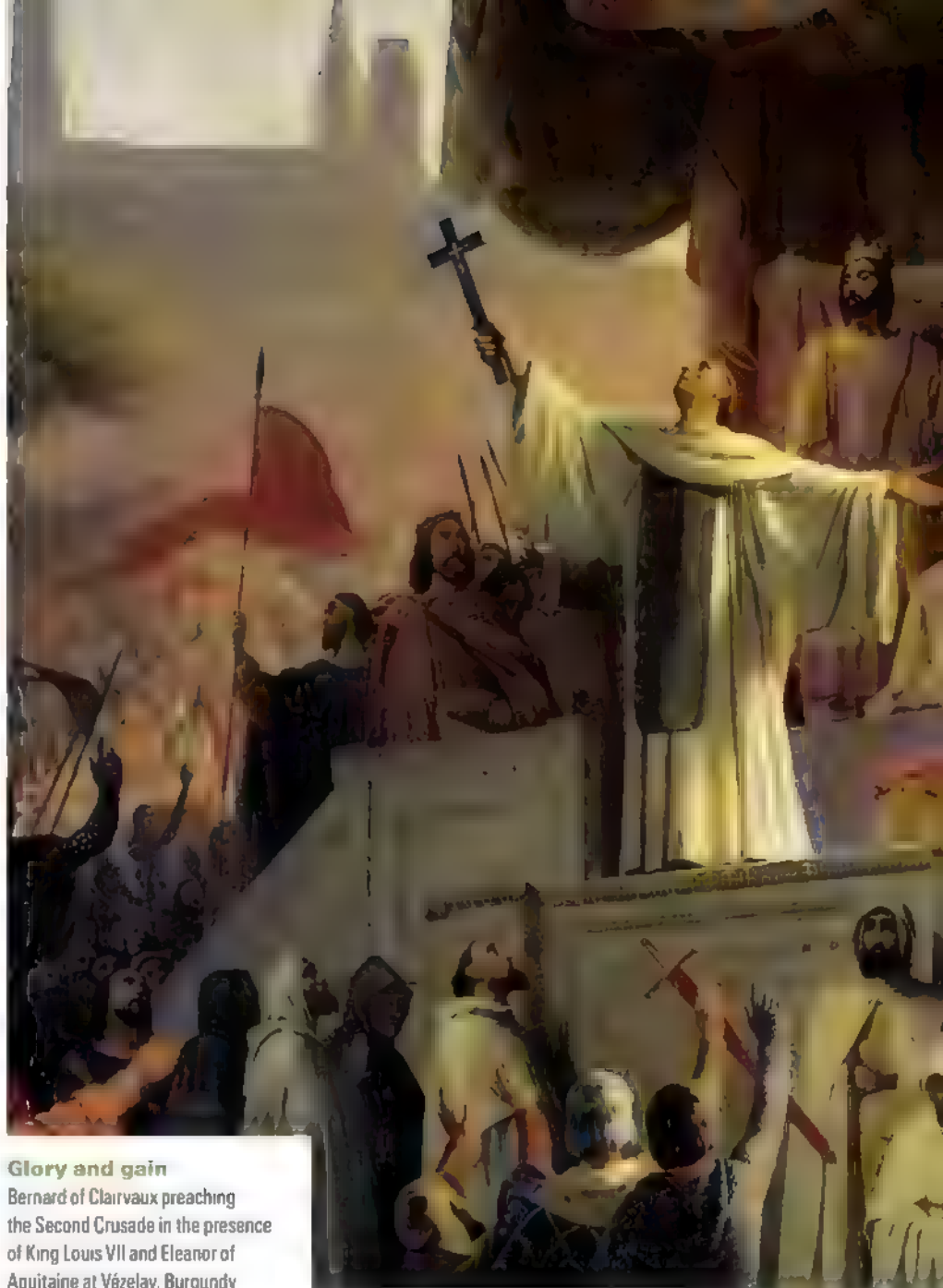
The Christian cavalry, commanded by a wily Norman nobleman called Bohemond of Taranto, held the tormentors at bay for long enough to allow reinforcements to arrive from several miles away. These fresh troops forced the Turks into a disorderly retreat, which soon became a rout. After it was finished, the crusaders buried their dead and gave thanks for their victory.

The battle of Dorylaeum was remembered for years afterwards as a demonstration of God's approval for crusading and an example of the first crusaders' extraordinary resilience and motivation. It was also remembered as a day that had proven unexpectedly lucrative. One writer recorded the slogan shouted from man to man on the front line at Dorylaeum: "Stand fast all together," they had yelled as the Turks swooped, "trusting in Christ and in the victory of the Holy Cross. Today, please God, you will all gain much booty!"

This had proved prophetic. For not only did the crusaders record an inspirational military victory; they also gleefully looted the camp of the Turkish leader, Qilij Arslan, and enriched themselves by plundering the bodies of the 3,000 enemy soldiers who had been killed. They had trusted in Christ and, just as promised, gained much booty. Their pithy, two-pronged war cry captured the two great preoccupations of the crusader age: faith and gold.

A hotchpotch of enemies

Many historians date the crusades from the preaching of the First Crusade by Pope Urban II at Clermont in 1095 to the fall of the last Islamic strongholds in al Andalus



Glory and gain

Bernard of Clairvaux preaching the Second Crusade in the presence of King Louis VII and Eleanor of Aquitaine at Vézelay, Burgundy

(southern Spain) in 1492. They were a series of interconnected Christian 'holy wars' fought against a wide variety of foes.

The First Crusade was called to aid Greek Christians of the Byzantine empire in their wars against the Turks of Anatolia, and subsequently to seize Jerusalem from its rule by Fatimid Shia caliphs based in Cairo. But over the generations, many more crusades were raised – against Arabs, Turks and Kurds, Sunni and Shia Muslims, Berbers from north Africa, pagans in Latvia, Cathars in southern France, Mongols in eastern Europe. War was also waged on a hotchpotch of other real and perceived enemies of Christ – including both Byzantine and Holy Roman Emperors and several Christian kings.

The purpose of all these crusades was ostensibly twofold. Popes authorised warfare in Christ's name because they thought it was their duty to protect Christian people and lands from non-believers. Ordinary

The victors' two-pronged war cry captured the two great preoccupations of the crusader age: faith and gold

medieval people took crusade vows, sewed distinctive cloth crosses to their garments and joined crusader armies because they were promised that in doing so they would earn forgiveness for their earthly sins, thereby easing their passage into heaven.

These two aims were repeated throughout the history of crusading. When Urban II launched the First Crusade, chroniclers



recalled that he spoke of avenging insults to "the sanctuary of God" (ie Jerusalem) by declaring "wars which contain the glorious reward of martyrdom". The great Cistercian abbot Bernard of Clairvaux helped preach the Second Crusade, which began in 1147, calling upon the knights of western Europe to join "a cause in which to conquer is glorious and for which to die is gain". When Pope Gregory VIII preached the Third Crusade in 1187, after Jerusalem had fallen to the sultan Saladin, he asked crusaders to be "courageous, because it is better to perish in a fight than to behold... the profanation of holy things".

There were, by contrast, very few occasions when churchmen encouraged crusaders to think of material gain. In fact, crusade preachers more often spoke of the miserable hardships of crusading, the expenses that would be incurred by those who joined the movement, and the necessity of, as Gregory VIII put it, rejecting "luxury



God's approval Gustave Doré's engraving of the funerals of the crusaders after the battle of Dorylaeum in 1097. The battle was remembered as an extraordinary – and extraordinarily lucrative – victory against the odds.

and ostentation and wearing simple clothes as would befit people doing penance for their sins". The official line, at least, was that crusaders were expected to comport themselves humbly and expect their reward in the next world rather than on earth.

Combining profit with piety

Yet throughout its history, crusading was founded on doublethink. The truth was that, just as those men who called the crusades managed to square Christ's peaceable teachings with the idea of waging wars of conquest in his name, so too were they quietly relaxed about the prospect of crusaders going off to fight as penitent pilgrims while still hoping to come home with their pockets full, as well as their souls cleansed.

In the decades before the crusades began, several western writers noted that Christian warriors thought about their personal wealth at least as much as their spiritual health. Describing commerce between Christians and pagan peoples of the Baltic in the 1070s, the chronicler Adam of Bremen wrote that "men cared as much for [trading] furs as for their immortal souls". Around the same time, in the southern Mediterranean, a writer called Geoffrey Malaterra was describing the Norman conquest of Arab Sicily; he noted that these Normans attacked Sicily's Muslim rulers not just for religious purposes but for "material benefit". Eleventh-century kings who conquered lands from Muslim rulers in Spain used



It's a steal

This enameled Byzantine liturgical book, encrusted with pearls, was almost certainly looted during the Fourth Crusade (1202–04).



Rich pickings

Venice shown in a c14th-century manuscript. The Italian trading city profited hugely from participating in the crusades

their war spoils to make large donations to the Cluniac monastic order. The instinct to combine profit with piety predated crusading, and when the church decided to institutionalise war on non-Christians, it survived intact.

Of course, not all crusaders got rich. Many who joined the First Crusade were maimed, killed or bankrupted themselves due to the expense of the journey. Yet there were a significant number of others who did very well out of the enterprise. When the first crusaders entered Jerusalem in July 1099 and put the city to the sword, one of the Norman leaders, Tancred of Hauteville, sent his personal bodyguards to the Haram al-Sharif (Temple Mount), where they spent two days relieving the shrine of the Dome of the Rock (known by the crusaders as the Temple of the Lord) of its most precious ornaments.

Tancred pilfered what one chronicler called "an incomparable quantity of gold and silver". He wasn't alone. All over the city, crusaders seized "gold and silver, horses and mules and houses full of all sorts of goods". So much for Christ's plea to "sell what you have, give to the poor, and you shall have

treasure in heaven" (Matthew 19:21). The crusaders in 1099 put that recommendation firmly out of their minds.

From this point on, the possibility of financial reward remained one of several strong motivators for crusaders. In 1107–11 the first king to travel from Europe on crusade was Sigurd I of Norway. The sagas that tell of his epic journey to Jerusalem, via Muslim-held cities of modern Spain and Portugal, are full of gleeful references to the amount of booty Sigurd's sailors seized along the way. When Sigurd left the Holy Land, his ships were laden with so much treasure that they displayed it on their masts and sails, where it caught the light to dazzling effect.

Many more followed suit. In the aftermath of 1099, four crusader states were established along the Palestinian and Syrian coast: the kingdom of Jerusalem, the counties of Edessa and Tripoli and the principality of Antioch. They offered estates to be farmed, villages to be taxed, port cities to be developed and merchant routes connecting the Mediterranean world with the faraway markets of India and China. Very quickly, the more resourceful powers of western

Europe realised how much potential lay in these acquisitions. They made a beeline to the east to carve out their own roles in this exciting new world, establishing lordships, bishoprics and trading stations.

Prominent in this were the three great trading cities of northern Italy: Genoa, Pisa and Venice. All three possessed significant naval power, which they could lend to crusader campaigns to conquer or defend coastal cities in the east, such as Acre, Tyre and Beirut. They were keen to establish their reputations as prominent members of the Christian world. And they each knew that if they engaged with crusading, they would be rewarded not only with the forgiveness of sins promised by successive popes, but also in economic terms.

Few episodes illustrate this more effectively than the siege of Tyre – a stoutly defended city in modern Lebanon – which took place in 1124. More than 100 Venetian ships, commanded by the doge [duke] of Venice, Domenico Michiel, sailed to the east to take part in the siege. Their presence was vital to Tyre's capture and their reward was quite magnificent: a third of the city's revenues were granted to the Venetians.



Spoils of war These gilded bronze horses were plundered from Constantinople in the Fourth Crusade and brought back to Venice as booty. They are now located at St Mark's Basilica.

Across the city crusaders seized “gold and silver, horses and mules, and houses full of all sorts of goods”

and a self-governing Venetian trading colony was established, with its own laws, regulations and tax exemptions.

Tyre would remain in Christian hands for more than 160 years, and during that time the republic of Venice profited handsomely. This was by no means unique. In every major city up and down the coast, Italian merchant colonies were a familiar sight, their willingness to pour investment into the crusading cause amply and visibly rewarded.

Conquer and prosper

Needless to say, the tension between crusaders' dedication to the “victory of the holy Cross” and the pursuit of “booty” could have unpleasant and even fatal consequences for those on the receiving end. The most notorious example of this, perhaps, occurred in the Fourth Crusade of 1202–04 and once again involved the republic of Venice.

The citizens of Venice agreed to build – at great cost – a massive fleet to transport the armies of the Fourth Crusade to Egypt, where they planned to conquer the wealthy city of Alexandria. In the end, however, the crusading fleet diverted to the Christian cities of Zara (modern Zadar) and Constantinople. Both of these were treated savagely, and Constantinople was pillaged, to the disgrace of Christendom but the lavish

profit of Venice. Visitors to St Mark's Basilica can still see four magnificent gilded bronze statues of horses that were taken from Constantinople at that time.

Venice was hardly a lone villain. Throughout the 13th century, bitter complaints were levelled at the international ‘military orders’ of religious warriors – Templars, Hospitallers and Teutonic knights – who were sworn to live lives of austere, pious hardship, devoting all their efforts to the crusade. It was very often muttered that, far from being poor knights of Christ, the members of these orders enjoyed lives of great wealth and comfort, thanks to their broad-ranging tax exemptions and the lavish donations they received from their supporters.

In a sense, this was quite true. The Teutonic knights profited handsomely from their deployment around the Baltic, where they fought a perpetual crusade to clear pagans from the land and claim it for themselves and other Christian settlers. The Templars, meanwhile, were brought down in 1307–12, in part because of the sheer envy that their vast wealth aroused in the mind of the French king Philip IV.

It is important to reiterate that not everyone who went on crusade during the Middle Ages came home rich. Many lost everything, including their lives. At the same time, few crusaders were motivated solely by one factor. Humans are complicated, and crusading bound together passionately held Christian faith with a real belief in the need to defeat Christ's enemies and atone for earthly sins.

Yet in the cocktail of reasons for crusading often lay a base but timeless human instinct: the desire to get rich quick. ■

Dan Jones is a historian and presenter whose books include *Crusaders: An Epic History of the Wars for the Holy Lands* (Head of Zeus, 2019)

PRIZE FIGHTERS

Three money-mad
crusaders

THE NORSE PLUNDERER

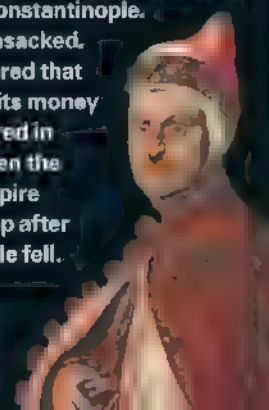
Sigurd 'Jerusalemfarer' was a Christian king of Norway who led a band of Vikings on an armed pilgrimage from Scandinavia to Jerusalem between 1107 and 1111. On their journey, Sigurd's men plundered Muslim strongholds in Lisbon, Ibiza, Formentera and Menorca and banqueted with Roger II of Sicily. Once in the east, Sigurd was feted by King Baldwin I of Jerusalem, who took him to bathe in the river Jordan and worship at Christ's tomb. Sigurd was given a fragment of the True Cross to take back to Norway, and he also shared in the vast amount of booty taken when his men helped wrest the city of Sidon from Muslim rule.

GOLDEN CAMPAIGNER

Although **John of Gaunt** was born long after the kingdom of Jerusalem was destroyed in 1291, the uncle of Richard II of England still considered himself a crusader. He managed to have his campaign to claim the crown of Castile in 1386–87 classified as a crusade. Although he never secured that prize, he signed a peace accord to end his campaign that awarded him so much gold it took 47 mules to transport it all back to England. This wealth helped fund the crusade adventures of his son Henry Bolingbroke (the future Henry IV), who joined the Teutonic knights fighting pagans in the Baltic.

RANSACKER-IN-CHIEF

Although he was in his 90s and completely blind, **Enrico Dandolo** (below) was a formidable ruler of the republic of Venice during the Fourth Crusade of 1202–04. When French crusaders could not pay the bill for Venetian shipping, Dandolo insisted on diverting to the Christian cities of Zara and Constantinople. Both were ransacked. Dandolo ensured that Venice made its money back and shared in the spoils when the Byzantine empire was divided up after Constantinople fell.



Crusading beyond the Holy Land

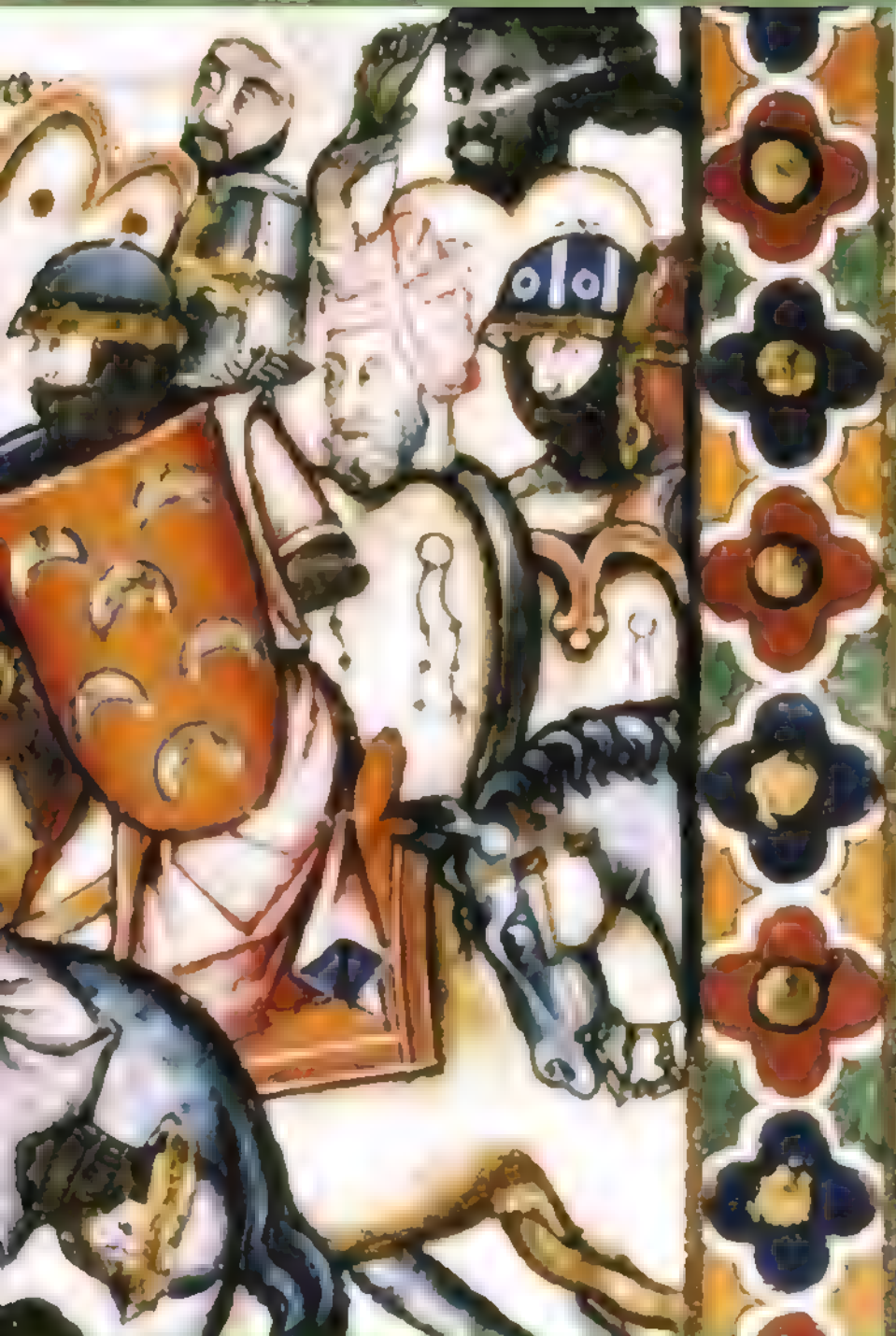
Our standard image of the crusades shows Europeans fighting Muslims in faraway places. But, says **Susanna Throop**, holy war also took place much closer to home – and even against Christians



Crusaders and Muslims fight on the Iberian peninsula in a 13th-century image. Warriors crusaded in Africa and Europe as well as the Holy Land

**“Go forth, therefore,
knight of Christ; go forth,
most Christian prince! ...
Gird on our sword, so that
we may both be avenged
on these criminal and
inhuman evildoers”**

Pope Innocent III, 1208



With these words, Pope Innocent III urged Philip II, the self-styled King of France, to go on crusade. Popes had written similarly to kings before. In 1208, however, Innocent was not encouraging Philip to crusade to the Holy Land, but rather to crusade in what is now southern France. In this war, the ‘evildoers’ were in fact local purported heretics operating in the coastal region of Languedoc.

The history of crusading outside the Holy Land shakes up conventional ideas of holy war. Earlier generations of western scholars prioritised geographic location and Christian piety when they tried to determine what was and was not a crusade. This led them to decide on the traditional, numbered crusades. Starting in the late 20th century, however, scholars have begun to recognise that most crusades took place outside the immediate environs of Jerusalem. These campaigns, too, were described with pious rhetoric and imagery in historical sources, even when other potential motivations were also present. And all of them featured certain standard practices such as papal authorisation, the taking of vows, and spiritual privileges for participants. This approach to the study of the crusades is now dominant, and it has vastly expanded our understanding of the crusading movement.

We now recognise that, from the late 11th century onwards, crusades were directed against alleged heretics, pagan non-Christians, Muslims and enemies of the papacy in a wide range of locales in Afro-Eurasia. The crusading movement focused primarily on the intentions, the behaviours and above all the perceived divine backing of the crusaders themselves, and accommodated diverse targets and locations with broad, generalised rhetoric. Crusading was thus a highly versatile form of Christian holy war that was easily applicable in many different contexts. This fuller history upsets epic narratives of civilisational clashes between east and west.

Over the next few pages, we explore five distinct areas beyond the Holy Land that witnessed episodes of crusading activity



A defender wields a slingshot in an Arab fresco showing the conquest of Mallorca by King James I of Aragon, preached as a crusade

IBERIAN PENINSULA

“We should become knights of Christ and, after defeating his wicked enemies the Muslims, open the way to the same Sepulchre of the Lord through Iberia, which is shorter and much less laborious”

Archbishop Diego Gelmírez, 1120s

Crusading in Iberia was deeply entangled with pre-existing warfare, in particular the campaigns of competing Christian rulers who aspired to ‘reconquer’ the peninsula. These rulers were already infusing their wars with Christian rhetoric, but the rise of the crusading movement added a further layer of sanctity and legitimacy, as well as a powerful spiritual incentive for those who fought.

The first pope to firmly connect this ongoing and episodic Iberian warfare with crusading was Calixtus II, who in 1123 envisioned simultaneous crusading against the ‘enemies of Christ’ at either end of the Mediterranean Sea. The idea that crusading in Iberia was ‘like crusading in the Holy Land’ – indeed, that it would also ‘open a way’ to the Holy Sepulchre of Christ in Jerusalem – became a recurring theme in Iberian crusading. At some times in the centuries that followed, the papacy took the lead in declaring a crusade, while at others, popes simply recognised post hoc that a certain campaign had, in fact, been holy and penitential.

Crusading in Iberia waxed and waned through the Middle Ages, and ended in 1492 when the joint Christian monarchs Ferdinand II of Aragon and Isabella I of Castile successfully conquered Granada, the last Muslim-ruled state on the peninsula. In years to follow, Isabella and Ferdinand would expel all practising Jews and Muslims from their realm, and the state-controlled Spanish Inquisition would prosecute thousands for religious non-conformity. Simultaneously, Spanish (and Portuguese) crusading would continue beyond the peninsula, most especially in Africa.



Crusaders fight the Republic of Novgorod in the 1242 battle on the Ice at Lake Peipus in the Baltics

BALTICS

“We completely forbid that a truce be made with these people for any reason, either for money or tribute, until, with God’s help, either their religion or their nation be destroyed”

Bernard of Clairvaux, 1147

In 1147, the crusade preaching tour of Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux, visited Frankfurt. While there, he heard an appeal from local magnates: might they fulfil crusade vows and merit spiritual privileges by continuing their warfare against the Wends? The Wends were an originally pagan people who had been conquered and nominally converted. They had rebelled against their new rulers and, by doing so, made themselves apostates – thus justifying warfare against them. Bernard and his former pupil Pope Eugenius III granted this request and authorised warfare against the Wends as a form of crusade, alongside crusading to the Holy Land and in Iberia. Clearly concerned that expedient truces might end the crusade prematurely, Bernard added a caveat that there was to be no peace until the Wends’ religion or nation was destroyed.

In the Baltics, then, as in Iberia, crusading complemented a pre-existing tradition of Christian warfare. Crusading added an explicit layer of spiritual privilege and divine sanction to wars that were already conceptualised as an expansion of Christendom, even while

they also served to boost the power and wealth of ambitious Christian magnates and monarchs in north-eastern Europe. Nonetheless, in the decades that followed Bernard’s stark admonition, attitudes towards the ‘crusading-ness’ of Christian warfare in the Baltics shifted back and forth.

By the papacy of Innocent III (1198–1216), the crusading nature of this warfare was established, although some still considered it less meritorious than campaigning in the Holy Land. Furthermore, Innocent III empowered local leaders to recruit fighters largely at will, resulting in what has been called a ‘perpetual crusade’. The result was conquest, colonisation and conversion. At the same time, religious imagery and rhetoric infused these campaigns: the Baltics were also described as ‘holy lands’, and were in particular imagined as the dowry of Mary, who actively blessed the crusades. Ultimately, crusading in the Baltics burned itself out by the end of the 14th century: the culture of those living there earlier had indeed been subjugated, as Bernard had insisted.

NORTH AFRICA

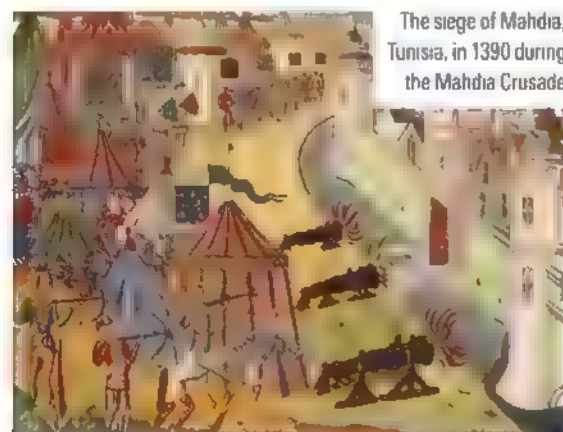
“Baldwin, a relative of Roger the Frank who had conquered Sicily, gathered a great host of Franks and sent to Roger, saying: ‘I shall proceed to Ifriqiya [north Africa] to take it and I shall be your neighbour.’”

Ibn al-Athir, early 13th century

It's only 200 miles from Palermo to Tunis. If we remember that, until very recently, the fastest means of travel was by sea, and if we recognise the position of north Africa in the larger Mediterranean world, it's no surprise that crusading took place there. Some Muslim commentators – like the author of the above quote – even ascribed the desire to control north Africa to the crusaders of 1096, thus linking the First Crusade with other expansionary Christian warfare, such as the 1061–91 Norman conquest of Sicily. And as early as 1114, 15 years after the First Crusade took Jerusalem, the papacy granted the remission of sins to those who fought Muslims in the Balearics.

Particularly from the early 13th century onwards, major north African cities including Alexandria, Damietta, Tunis and Mahdia were crusading targets. With hindsight, it's easy to see pragmatic reasons for focusing on north Africa, and popes and princes at the time certainly took note of its strategic location, abundant natural resources, rich trade routes and concentration of wealth. Nonetheless, crusades to north Africa were invariably described with the same religious ideas and imagery as other crusades. Indeed, campaigns to Alexandria and Damietta in particular were explicitly described as ultimately aimed at the Holy Land. Thus, like missions in the Iberian peninsula, crusading in north Africa was at times imagined as ‘another way’ to the Holy Sepulchre.

In the later Middle Ages and the early modern period, north Africa remained pivotal for strategic and economic as well as religious reasons. Many of the last crusades were fought for control of this edge of the Mediterranean, including those of Holy Roman Emperor Charles V to Tunis, Algiers and Mahdia in the first half of the 16th century, and that of King Sebastian of Portugal to Morocco in 1578.



The siege of Mahdia, Tunisia, in 1390 during the Mahdia Crusade



ITALY

“Perhaps you say: we take up arms against pagans, but not against Christians. But whom should you fight more – a pagan who does not know God, or a Christian confessing himself in words and deeds to be opposed [to God]?”

Peter the Venerable, 1150

When Peter the Venerable, the influential Abbot of Cluny, wrote these words, he was expanding on an established tradition of righteous violence against heretics, which had long been seen as acceptable. However, Peter and thinkers like him took this idea that little bit further by justifying crusading violence against Christians who were thought to have shown themselves to be ‘false’ Christians. Naturally, foremost among these were

those who opposed the initiatives and claims of the papacy and its allies.

The first granting of full crusade privileges to those fighting Christian enemies of the papacy dates to 1135. The practice would continue for centuries – as late as 1551, Pope Julius III threatened to crusade against the Protestant-supporting King of France. While clearly not all crusades against papal enemies took place in Italy, many did, and this is no



A knight drags the body of King Manfred of Sicily along the ground, after his defeat by Charles of Anjou in a crusade preached by Pope Urban IV

surprise. Southern Italy, and the island of Sicily in particular, were critical strategic locations in the greater Mediterranean world. Furthermore, the centuries-long conflict between emperors and popes for supremacy in Latin Christendom played out in Italy at intervals, since both emperors and popes laid claim to territory there and had loyal supporters in Italy's towns and cities.

Perhaps the most dramatic moments of conflict over southern Italy and Sicily took place between the Hohenstaufen imperial dynasty and the papacy in the 13th century. Frederick II Hohenstaufen, King of Sicily and Germany and Holy Roman Emperor, was famously unpopular with the papacy, despite having had Innocent III as one of many guardians during an orphaned childhood. Crusades against Frederick II were first preached in 1239 and continued to be preached against his descendants well after his death in 1250. Indeed, by the 1260s and 1270s, crusades were being preached

and fought in rapid succession after Charles I, the ambitious count of Anjou, accepted the papacy's invitation to seize and claim Sicily. Yet the accompanying onslaught of crusading did not achieve all its aims. Although the male heirs of the Hohenstaufen family were extinguished, the female heirs were not, and ultimately Charles and the papacy were outmanoeuvred on Sicily.

It's often wondered whether Christians found crusades against papal enemies as appealing as crusades against other targets. The short answer is yes, they did. Of course, such crusades were loudly denounced by those who were targeted, but nonetheless calls to crusade in this way were successful over many centuries. This should not surprise us too much: the spiritual privileges on offer were the same. And presumably Peter the Venerable's reasoning seemed sound to many

WESTERN EUROPE

"Jesus Christ governs us.... But the lord pope, who ought to care for us, and the prelates of the church who condemn us to death – may God give them courage, knowledge and judgment, so that they know what is right..."

The Song of the Albigensian Crusade, early 13th century

The account of the Albigensian Crusade (1209–29) quoted above was written from two dramatically different perspectives. Its early pages were penned by a supporter of the crusade, while the larger, second part of the text – the source of our quote – was from an anonymous opponent, who wrote a continuation of the work at a later date. It is a pointed reminder that those deemed 'enemies of Christ' by crusaders may have seen themselves in very different terms.

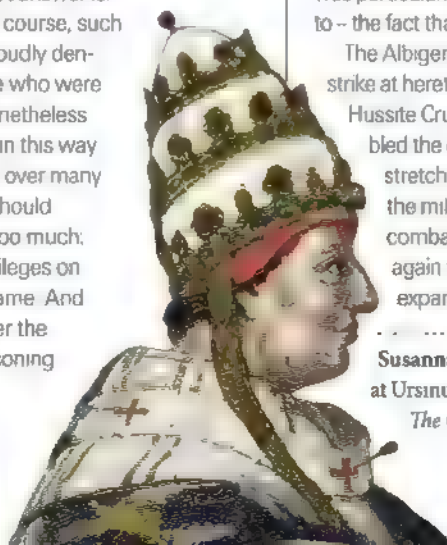
The Albigensian Crusade was hardly a surprise. For decades, the papacy had been worried about reports of heresy in what is now southern France, and had been trying to coax the French monarch and other nobles to tackle the problem for almost as long. Stamping out heresy was theoretically the responsibility of secular rulers. Pope Innocent III (pictured below) was only successful in getting a crusade into gear after the killing of a papal legate in 1208 – and once he'd decided that those who crusaded in the Languedoc would be allowed to keep the property of heretics and their supporters.

The crusade took place over 20 years of seasonal campaigns, and resulted in a substantial realignment of power within the area we now know as France. It also contributed to the establishment of two tools against heresy: the Dominican Order, and the institution of a church-wide Inquisition. These tools were deemed necessary for the future, in part because the crusade did not root out all heresy in the region.

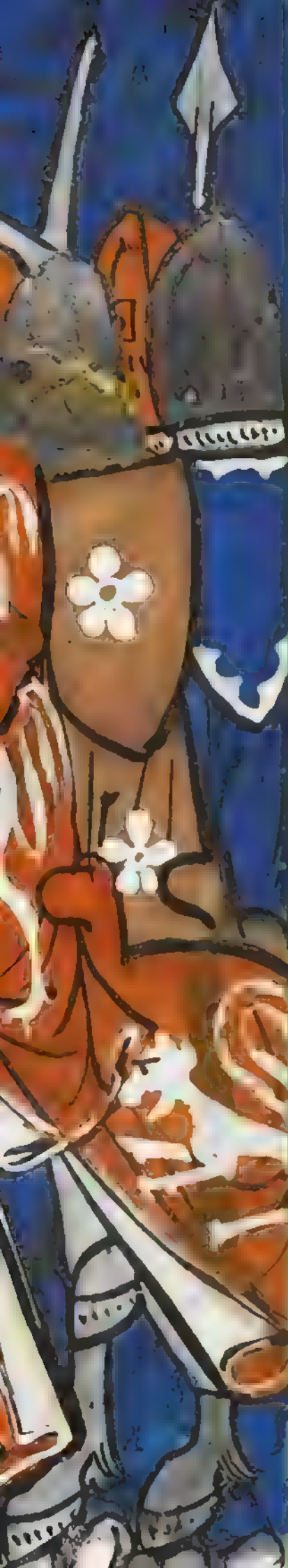
The rhetoric and imagery of the Albigensian Crusade, and of other crusades against heretics, were drawn from the same well as those of other crusades, with the added virtue that 'deliberate' rebels against God had long been thought to deserve. The spiritual privileges on offer were the same. The one identifiable distinction is that the fighting in this crusade was particularly brutal on all sides, despite – or perhaps due to – the fact that neighbours were fighting neighbours.

The Albigensian Crusade was far from the only one to strike at heretics in the Middle Ages. In particular, the Hussite Crusades in early 15th-century Bohemia resembled the events in the Languedoc. Again warfare stretched over decades, again papal authority and the military strength of secular leaders combined to combat a perceived threat to Christendom, and again the crusades were viewed as blatant territorial expansion by those it targeted. **H**

Susanna Throop is associate professor of history at Ursinus College, Pennsylvania. She is the author of *The Crusades: An Epitome* (Kismet Press, 2018).







Royal at arms

In a 14th-century manuscript, Henry III (left) is shown fighting his nobles during the Second Barons' War (1264–67). This was both a revolutionary war and, from the perspective of Henry's foes, a religious conflict too

Holy war on the **HOME FRONT**

The nobleman Simon de Montfort saw himself as a righteous general leading his army in a holy struggle. As **Sophie Thérèse Ambler** recounts, not only did he fight infidels overseas but, in the 1260s, he also challenged the authority of the crown on home soil



As the darkness seeped away into the dawn, the army reached the crest of the hill and the men put down their packs. Each of them wore on his chest and shoulder an insignia: the cross. They were *crucesignati*, crusaders. Before they set out on their march through the early hours, a bishop had promised them remission of their sins if they fought hard in the hours to come. Now, as they readied for battle, they turned to listen to their leader. They were fighting today, he told them, for the honour of God, the saints and the church. May the Lord, he prayed, grant them the strength to do his work and overcome the wickedness of all enemies. Finally, he commended to God their bodies and their souls. Then the men, in their thousands, sank to the ground. Laying their faces against the earth, they stretched out their arms, sending out their own prayers for heavenly aid.

They went on to fight, and to win, that morning. Their battle, though, was not fought amid the arid mounts and plains of the Holy Land, but on a hillside in Sussex. Their enemy not the Muslim infidel, but the



Simon de Montfort's seal. The 6th Earl of Leicester briefly exerted more power in England than King Henry III

monarch of England. This was a new sort of holy war, for their objective was neither the taking of sacred ground nor the preservation of the Christian faith. It was a new way of ruling England, a way that had no effective place for kings. Their leader was Simon de Montfort, 6th Earl of Leicester – and his victory that day in May 1264 in the battle of Lewes would make him the most powerful man in the kingdom.

The movement had begun six years before, in the spring of 1258. Seven noblemen, de Montfort among them, had donned their armour and marched on Westminster Hall. Their ultimatum was clear: Henry III must hand over the reins of power or they would take them by force. It struck home. "What is this, my lords?" the king had cried. "Am I, poor wretch, your captive?"

The nobles went on to set up a council of 15, which took control of the machinery of central government – the exchequer and chancery – and the instruments of royal power in the shires: the king's castles and the sheriffs. The council would rule with the help of parliament. This had hitherto been summoned only at the king's wish – usually when he needed consent to raise a tax – but was now to meet three times a year to help



Baronial troops clash with Henry III's forces in the battle of Lewes. Following his victory in the hills of Sussex, Simon de Montfort took charge of a radical new regime, with a parliament at its heart.



Clash of faiths King Baldwin II of Jerusalem engages Muslim forces in 1119. The Second Barons' War saw troops replicating the ideals of the crusades – and fighting a 'holy war' – on English soil for the very first time

make decisions about the running of the kingdom. These measures, and those that followed, came to be known as the Provisions of Oxford, after the parliament in the summer of 1258 at which they were drafted.

The Provisions were nothing short of radical. Medieval Europe was accustomed to protests against improper royal rule in the form of rebellions, but those were demands for the restoration of good government by the king. This was the first attempt to overturn the political system, doing away with monarchy as a means of ruling and, in early 1265, producing the first parliament to which representatives of the towns were summoned. It was the first revolution in England's – or indeed in Europe's – history.

Low-key monarch

Yet there was nothing in Henry III's rule that warranted such drastic measures. Henry, unlike his father, King John, did not rule with disregard for the law and was not cruel – indeed, he was devout, generous and tolerant towards his nobles. But Henry was *simplex*, a term used by his subjects to mean that he lacked political nous and was easily led. In 1258, frustration with Henry's simplicity peaked when he demanded a tax to fund his proposed conquest of Sicily

De Montfort headed the first revolution in England's – or indeed in Europe's – history

– an eye-wateringly expensive venture about which his subjects had not been consulted – and failed to bring to heel his half-brothers, the Lusignans, who were perpetrating illegal and insulting attacks on their fellow magnates. But in the historical parade of tyrannical or disastrous rulers, Henry III's reign hardly ranked at all. There was no clear reason to turn to radical action. The barons did so, it seems, in the heat of the moment, as tensions and tempers flared in the crucible of a particularly rowdy parliament.

But even if de Montfort's regime was hard to justify rationally, reasons soon emerged to preserve it. First, the council set out to provide justice to the numberless women and men of low status who had suffered under Henry's rule (for the king, unable to extract the money he needed from his nobles, had borne down upon those who could not resist). The council introduced a stream of measures to alleviate their suffering and to offer them ready access to justice, so that the royal officers responsible for their maltreatment could be called to account. The ruling nobles also imposed on themselves the same standards of good government that they demanded of the king – and offered the same right of redress to their own subjects.

There was a second moral buttress to the Provisions, too: an oath. At the Oxford parliament, all (except the Lusignans) vowed to support each other in defence of the Provisions. This was a sacred promise, made in the sight of God, and it required the staking of one's soul.

It was this sense of sacred commitment that brought Simon de Montfort to the fore. It was de Montfort who seems to have driven the legal and social reforms, and insisted that magnates hold themselves to the new moral standard, and it was he who reminded those who wavered of their oaths. He was "moved to rage" (as the chronicler Matthew Paris reports) at the Earl of Gloucester for hesitating to implement the reforms in his estates. "I have no desire," he told his fellow noble, "to live or keep company amongst people so inconstant and false. What we are doing now we agreed and swore together."

To emulate his father

In presenting the situation in these terms, de Montfort set in train the transformation of the rebels' political programme: it would become a *holy* cause, for which he and his men would go on to offer their lives. In a culture that valued armed devotion to God and the church above almost all else, it was an alluring proposition.

But such fervour had a dark side – with terrible consequences, in particular, for England's Jewish population. The year before the battle of Lewes, the Montfortians, seeking funds for their campaign and giving vent to their hatred, launched a frenzied attack on the Jewish people of London. "Sparing neither age nor sex", as the chronicler Thomas Wykes reports, they "inhumanly butchered the aged and elderly... children wailing in the cradle, babies not yet weaned hanging from their mother's breast". Independent reports suggest that between 400 and 500 were killed. The massacre was part of a developing pattern in which Jewish people were persecuted systematically, but its furious nature was probably the result of crusading fervour.

For all its brutality, it was this fervour that gave de Montfort's sentiments their wide appeal, attracting not only noblemen but bishops, monks, friars and many people from society's lowest ranks to the cause. But as for de Montfort himself, his inspiration was personal – and it came from his father.

Simon de Montfort the elder, known to his followers simply as the Count, was elected leader of the Albigensian Crusade in 1209, charged with commanding the expedition against the Cathar heretics of Languedoc. The Count has been widely vilified, although this reflects subsequent



A stained glass window in St Lawrence's Church, Evesham, shows Simon de Montfort before going into battle

De Montfort transformed the rebellion into a holy cause, for which he and his men would go on to offer their lives

attitudes more than medieval ones. (Modern audiences tend to be disturbed more by the killing of white Europeans than of Muslims of the Middle East). In his own time, the Count was greatly admired for his prowess and dedication to the holy cause, and was even chosen in 1212 by the barons of England plotting to replace King John. To de Montfort, who grew up listening to stories of his father's deeds, the Count was a hero.

There was one element of the Count's character that was emphasised above everything else in these stories: he held true to his oath to fight the holy war no matter what suffering he had to endure, while lesser men, those who were faithless, timid or selfish, abandoned their oaths and abandoned the Count. As de Montfort the elder's story was committed to parchment, and tales of his heroic deeds were sung in the family's feasting hall after his death, this became a model for leadership in holy war. The Count's children, including Simon, the youngest of three sons, were being exhorted to live up to his example.

And so when the young Simon de Montfort became leader of his own holy cause, he looked to his father's memory for inspiration

and a model for his leadership, casting himself as indefatigable in his dedication and denouncing those who failed to keep their oath to the Provisions. When many of his allies submitted to the king in 1261, he reportedly proclaimed that "he would rather die without land than withdraw from the truth as a perjurer". After his great victory at the battle of Lewes, the song composed to celebrate his victory emphasised his unparalleled commitment: "Hence can they, who readily swear and hesitate little to reject what they swear... estimate with how great care they ought to preserve their oath, when they see a man flee neither torment nor death, for the sake of his oath... Woe to the wretched perjurers, who fear not God, denying him for the hope of earthly reward, or fear of prison or of a light penalty"

There was a final example set for de Montfort to follow. The Count had been killed fighting his holy war in 1218 (his head was smashed open by a boulder from a trebuchet while besieging Toulouse), and other de Montfort men were killed in the same campaign: the Count's brother and second son, Guy. De Montfort's eldest brother, Amaury, survived this expedition only to die in 1241 on his way home from the Holy Land.

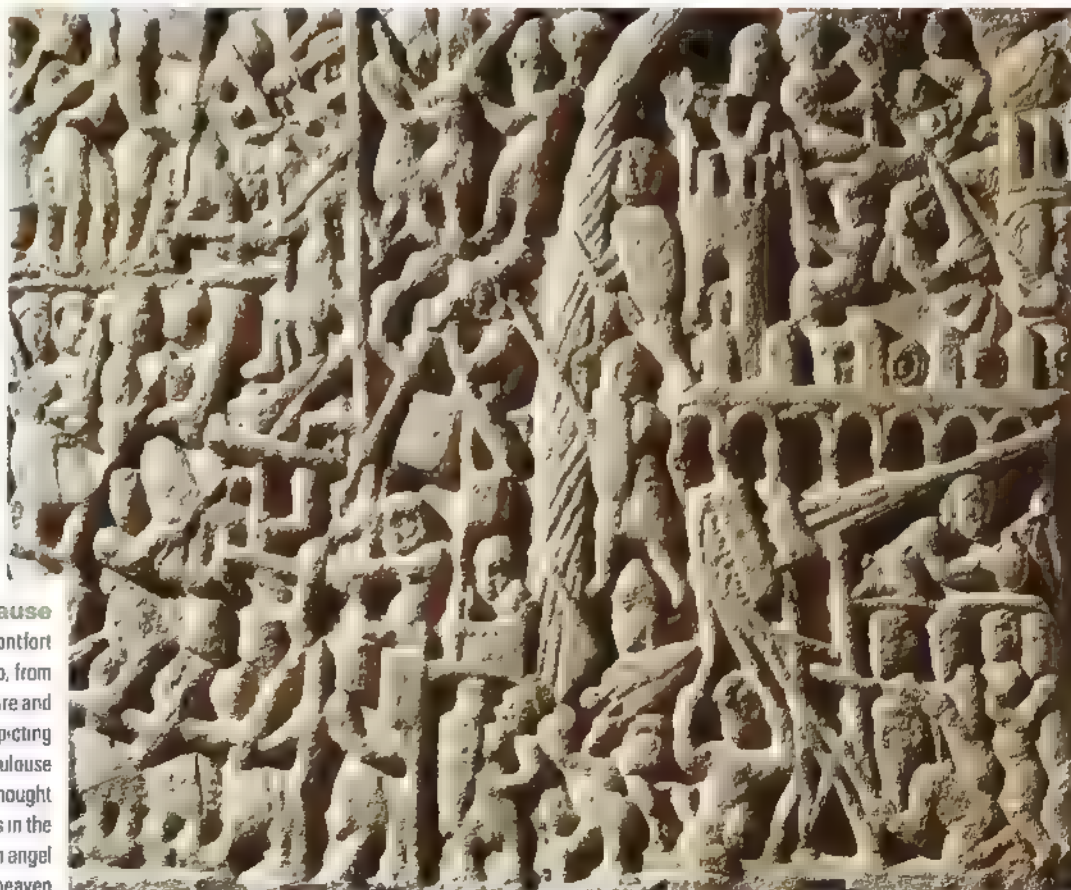
This extraordinary rate of attrition was the result of the de Montfort family's dedication to holy war. Death for noblemen was unlikely in European conflict between Christians at this time, because the values of chivalry protected those of knightly status and they would normally be taken captive for ransom. In holy war, whether in Languedoc or the Middle East, killing regardless of status was expected and the risk of knightly death was accepted. As de Montfort the younger took up his oath-bound cause in England, and transformed that cause into a crusade, he did so knowing that death in holy war was a family tradition. And just 15 months after his triumph at Lewes, he would follow in the footsteps of martyred family members, in the expectation of a martyr's reward.

Rebels brought to heel

Since the battle of Lewes, the Montfortian council had been ruling England, holding captive the king and his eldest son, Edward (the future King Edward I). But fortunes turned suddenly in the spring of 1265 when Edward escaped. He raised an army and, on 4 August 1265, caught up with the Montfortians at Evesham. He quickly secured the high ground; de Montfort's army, caught unawares, faced the dismal prospect of fighting, outnumbered, uphill. While withdrawal was still possible, he reportedly



Gullible monarch
Henry III – shown visiting France in a 14th-century illustration – was a generous king, but lacked political nous and was easily led



Dying for the cause
A fragment of Simon de Montfort the elder's original tomb, from the basilica of St Nazaire and Celsus in Carcassonne, depicting the 1217–18 siege of Toulouse where he was killed. It is thought that one of the figures in the top-right corner could be an angel taking de Montfort's soul to heaven



A rush of blood

The 14th-century *Rochester Chronicle* shows Simon de Montfort's body being dismembered following the battle of Evesham.

told his men to flee: "Fair lords, there are many among you who are not as yet tried and tested in the world, and who are young; you have wives and children, and for this reason look to how you might save yourselves and them." Turning to his old friend Hugh Despenser, he urged him to withdraw. Hugh could recover his position, for he would leave behind him "hardly anyone of such great value and worth". Hugh did not hesitate in his reply: "My lord, my lord, let it be. Today we shall drink from one cup, as we have done long since."

Carnage and cruelty

In the battle, Hugh would be cut down, one of the host of knights, together with thousands of non-noble troops, who chose to follow de Montfort to the end. That morning, Edward had selected his 12 best men, who were charged with killing de Montfort on the battlefield. This calculated brutality continued after de Montfort's death. Edward's men

set upon his corpse, cutting off his hands, his feet and his head, and cutting off his testicles and stuffing them into his mouth. His head was dispatched as a prize to the wife of the man who struck the lethal blow.

The barbarity did not end there. When the battle was lost, de Montfort's men attempted to take shelter in Evesham Abbey, but Edward's men broke the laws of sanctuary and hacked them down. "What was horrendous to see," recalled one of the monks of the ghastly scene that confronted him, "the choir of the church and the inside walls and the cross and the statues and the altars were sprayed with the blood of the wounded and dead, so that from the bodies that were there around the high altar a stream of blood ran right down into the crypts... No one knew how many there were except God."

No such battlefield slaughter had been seen in England since Hastings. The massacring of de Montfort and his fellow nobles was a mark of their transgression, for



A carved stone entrance in Evesham Abbey, where de Montfort's supporters sought shelter, only to be brutally hacked down by Prince Edward's men



stepping far beyond the bounds of noble conduct when they trampled on the crown. But it was also tied up with a monumental change in military culture: the descent into intra-noble killing, on and off the battlefield. This would see terrible results during conflicts in Sicily in the 1260s–80s – indeed, in 1271, two of de Montfort's sons would avenge their father's death by butchering Henry of Almain, Henry III's nephew, in the Church of San Silvestro in Viterbo, Italy. Such intra-noble brutality would also be repeated in the British Isles in the Wars of Scottish Independence, and across Europe in the Hundred Years' War.

De Montfort's story is key to understanding how this happened, for his elevation of a political struggle to the level of holy war was part of a larger phenomenon. In the 1250s and 1260s, the papacy launched a preaching campaign across Europe to raise an army of crusaders to attack the Hohenstaufen dynasty (whose territorial expansion

Edward's men set upon de Montfort's corpse, cutting off his testicles and stuffing them into his mouth

threatened papal power in Italy), while the papal legate sent to oust de Montfort's regime was authorised to offer indulgences to those fighting for the English crown.

Men were now being told that taking up arms against fellow Christians was not only acceptable but laudable, and would gain them the same spiritual rewards as fighting in the Holy Land. If that was the case, was *killing fellow Christians* equally acceptable? For two and a half centuries, the mental and geographical boundaries governing the conduct of war had been coterminous. Now, with no guidance as to which rules applied where and when, they began to disintegrate. It meant the death of chivalry, at least in the form that it had been known since the turn of the millennium. ■

Sophie Thérèse Ambler's latest book is *The Song of Simon de Montfort: England's First Revolutionary and the Death of Chivalry* (Picador, 2019)

WARRIORS



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The crack unit of holy hard-men
who spent two centuries
fighting for crusader interests





A kingdom falls
Muslim forces clash with
crusaders in a miniature from a
14th-century French manuscript.
Raymond's desertion at the
battle of Hattin in 1187 played
a key role in the crusaders'
defeat and the end of the first
Kingdom of Jerusalem.



RAYMOND *of* TRIPOLI: CRUSADER, DESERTER, TRAITOR

In 1187, a crusader army confronted Saladin in a decisive battle for the Holy Land – but was crushed when one power-hungry count fled the fight. **Jeffrey Lee** explores the life and legacy of Raymond III of Tripoli, whose treacherous desertion cost the kingdom of Jerusalem

Around nine o'clock in the morning on 4 July 1187, Count Raymond III of Tripoli took a fateful decision. Around him an apocalyptic battle raged. From his position as commander of the vanguard, Raymond could see that the great army of the kingdom of Jerusalem (the crusader state established after the First Crusade) was crumbling, suffering from heat and thirst. Beset from all sides by arrows and the swirling attacks of Saladin's cavalry, crusader resolve was wavering. At this crucial moment, after years of scheming, rebellion and treachery, Raymond could have chosen to fight and prove his loyalty to the Christian cause. Instead, he and his faction turned and fled.

After Raymond deserted the battle at the Horns of Hattin, the Muslim forces inflicted the greatest defeat ever suffered by a crusader army. Knights and infantry were annihilated, the king captured. Saladin, the Muslim leader, then swept through the kingdom of Jerusalem, taking cities and strongholds at will. In October, 88 years after its capture during the First Crusade, the holy city of Jerusalem surrendered to the jihad.

Many other factors contributed to this catastrophic reversal for the crusaders – the endemic shortage of fighting men, the wealth and manpower of their Muslim enemies, the loss of Byzantine support in the early 1180s, and the emergence of the ambitious Saladin as a leader in Egypt – but the single most damaging factor for the kingdom of Jerusalem in the decade leading up to 1187 was Raymond's lust for power.

Fiendish ambition

Raymond was born in 1140, and became Count of Tripoli after assassins murdered his father in 1152. He was dark-complexioned, with a hooked nose. Renowned for his intelligence and inquiring mind, he was considered by friends and enemies alike a shrewd and accomplished leader. He was related to the ruling family in Jerusalem; but for a man so fiendishly ambitious, Tripoli – a coastal crusader state spanning what is now northern Lebanon and western Syria – was to prove too small a pond.

In 1164, Raymond was taken prisoner by Turkish warlord Nur al-Din. During nine years in captivity he broadened his mind, learning to read and write. Ransomed for the huge sum of 80,000 dinars, he showed he had broadened his ambitions too. Almost immediately, he began interfering in the kingdom of Jerusalem, which bordered his county of Tripoli to the south.



Dissent among the crusaders in the months leading up to Hattin ensured Saladin won the battle, depicted here in a 14th-century manuscript

Raymond could have chosen to fight and prove his loyalty... Instead, he turned and fled

In 1174, he demanded to be made regent to his distant cousin, the 13-year-old King Baldwin IV. State affairs were under the control of the powerful noble Miles de Plancy, but that did not deter him. Miles was murdered in that same year, possibly assassinated as the result of a feud with a noble family, and Raymond became regent. He enhanced his status by marrying Lady Eschiva of Bures, becoming Prince of Galilee and Lord of Tiberias – the greatest feudal magnate in the kingdom.

The barons of the kingdom worked loyally with Raymond, but he proved a weak and selfish leader. He still owed most of his exorbitant ransom, and when the up-and-coming Muslim leader Saladin cleverly forgave the debt, Raymond allowed him a free hand to unite his power base of Egypt with Syria, hemming in the crusader lands. Even staunch partisans of Raymond



own territories to the north, allowing Saladin to attack across the unprotected southern frontier. The Muslims pillaged across the coastal plain to Mont Gisard, in the very heart of the kingdom. Jerusalem was saved only when Reynald de Châtillon's generalship, and the inspiration of the brave young leper king, delivered a stunning victory against overwhelming odds.

Raymond's first attempt to supplant Baldwin came in 1180. It appears he planned to make his ally Baldwin of Ibelin heir to the throne by marrying him to the king's sister Sibylla. The king neutered the conspiracy by marrying Sibylla to a handsome knight from Poitou, Guy de Lusignan. The traditional crusading story tells that Guy was resented as a poor leader and bumptious newcomer. But it was frustrated ambition, rather than incompetence or outsider status, that lay behind Raymond's loathing of Guy.

In 1182, Raymond threatened an armed coup, but Baldwin turned him back at the border with Tripoli. Raymond was not with the royal 'host' (army) when, later that year, Saladin invaded the kingdom with a vast

criticised this short-sighted deal.

Raymond's next round of machinations almost delivered the entire kingdom to Saladin. Raymond's regency ended when Baldwin came of age in 1177, but the youthful king suffered from leprosy and periodically needed someone to take charge when he was too ill to rule. Given Raymond's poor record as regent, the king turned instead to the loyal Reynald de Châtillon. Later that year, still smarting from his demotion, Raymond stymied a joint offensive against Saladin's Egypt by Baldwin and the Byzantine imperial fleet. This soured relations with Byzantium and snuffed out the last real chance to crush Saladin's growing power.

Raymond and his ally Bohemond of Antioch then went campaigning in their



The crowning of Guy de Lusignan. His inheritance of the throne of Jerusalem dashed Raymond's hopes of ever becoming king

Regent to the king

Raymond of Tripoli, who had designs on the kingdom of Jerusalem, is appointed regent to his distant cousin, the young King Baldwin IV. Raymond benefited from the assassination of the noble Miles de Plancy, who had been in charge of state affairs.



force but was obliged to withdraw after a sharp encounter at Le Forbelet. Tellingly, with Raymond absent, the crusader army acted decisively, without discord or prevarication.

Raymond's nefarious influence was back at work the following year when Saladin attacked again. The king was too sick to ride so the largest crusader army for years, funded by a dubious innovation – an income tax – was led by the new regent, Guy de Lusignan. While Saladin's soldiers sacked and burned, Raymond and his cronies arranged for the crusaders' campaign to fizzle out in an embarrassing fiasco of inactivity. In hindsight, the results were positive – Saladin retired without significant gains – but Guy had failed to exploit a mighty host, and his reputation was ruined. Baldwin relieved Guy of the regency and in November 1183 sought to cut him out of the succession altogether by crowning a co-ruler: five-year-old Baldwin V.

Hunger for power

By now, Raymond's hunger for power was common knowledge. Ibn Jubayr, a Muslim traveller from Andalusia who passed through the crusader lands in 1184, recorded that the most prominent crusader was "the accursed count, the lord of Tripoli and Tiberias. He has authority and position among them. He is qualified to be king and indeed is a candidate for the office."

By early 1185, Baldwin IV was clearly dying, and he turned again to Raymond as regent. The barons, though, so distrusted Raymond and his regal ambitions that they imposed stringent conditions. First, the boy-king Baldwin V was to be protected from Raymond by placing him in the care of his great-uncle Joscelin. Second, all royal castles were to be put beyond the regent's control, entrusted instead to the military orders of the Templars and Hospitallers. As regent, Raymond resumed his perniciously passive foreign policy. He made a four-year truce with Saladin, enabling the crusaders' most dangerous enemy to complete his subjugation of all neighbouring Muslim territories, untroubled by Frankish interference.

Then, in 1186, Baldwin V died (poisoned by Raymond, if you believe William of Newburgh, the 12th-century English historian). Raymond moved to seize power, convoking a council in Nablus, the stronghold of his Ibelin allies. But the supporters of the royal house, led by Reynald de Châtillon, crowned Sibylla and her husband Guy instead. Decisively outmanoeuvred, Raymond refused allegiance to the new

Saladin was endeavouring to undermine Christian power by fomenting discord among the parties

king, and retreated to Tiberias in flagrant rebellion. The crusaders' foes watched this political meltdown with glee. "Thus was their unity disrupted and their cohesion broken," wrote the great Muslim historian Ibn al-Athir. "This was one of the most important factors that brought about the conquest of their territories and the liberation of Jerusalem."

Things soon got even better for the Muslims. Not satisfied with dividing the kingdom, Raymond defected to the enemy. He "solicited and easily obtained the assistance of Saladin, who was endeavouring to undermine the Christian power by craftily fomenting discord among the parties". Raymond even welcomed Muslim cavalry and archers into Tiberias.

In siding with Saladin, Raymond's aim was simple: to seize the throne. Ibn al-Athir confirmed that Saladin accepted Raymond's allegiance and, in return, "he guaranteed that he would make him independent leader of all the Franks".

Raymond III's treason had devastating military consequences for the crusaders. He allowed Saladin to send a powerful raiding party through Galilee, confronted only by a scratch squadron of Templar and Hospitaller knights, who were massacred. With another Muslim invasion looming, the kingdom had just lost a tenth of its elite soldiery. Raymond's vassals were enraged, and pressured him to renounce his alliance with Saladin.

A grudging reconciliation was arranged with Guy, but it barely papered over the cracks in the crusader leadership. Raymond's presence added a strong military contingent, but it also introduced his trademark dithering and dissension. As Saladin swept across the Jordan with a force large enough to surround much of the Sea of Galilee, Raymond's arguments for restraint paralysed the army. His more bellicose rivals protested, plausibly, that Raymond was

trying to undermine Guy – as he had in 1183 – by ensuring another wasted campaign.

Raymond's treachery

Historians still believe Guy was wrong to leave his well watered base at Sephory and take the fight to Saladin, but his real mistake might have been listening to Raymond and waiting too long before attacking. The crusaders delayed until Saladin had stormed Tiberias and forced Guy's hand. Saladin chose the battlefield.

Raymond's role in the ensuing battle of Hattin is murky, to say the least. The author of the *Estoire de Eracles*, a contemporary chronicle, wrote that it was Raymond's suggestion to camp halfway to Tiberias on the night of 3 July, adding: "The king accepted this advice, but it was bad advice. If the Christians had pressed home the attack, they would have defeated the Turks." That night, both armies were exhausted but Muslim morale was boosted by the defection of five crusader knights. Significantly, they were followers of Raymond of Tripoli. Early next morning, 4 July, battle was rejoined in deadly earnest. Not long into the fight, Raymond performed his disappearing act. "He saw that the signs of defeat were already upon his co-religionists and no notion of aiding his fellows stopped him thinking about himself, so he fled at the beginning of the engagement before it grew fierce."

Most sources agree that Raymond and his knights charged at the Muslims, who simply opened their ranks and allowed them through. He "fled from the battle with his accomplices, while the Turks (as it is said) took no care to follow them", says one. Another source describes how, in their desperation to escape, "The speed of their horses in this confined space trampled down the Christians and made a kind of bridge... In this manner they got out of that narrow place by fleeing over their own men, over the Turks, and over the cross. Thus it was that they escaped with only their lives."

To many, Raymond's desertion was rank treachery. According to the *Itinerarium Regis Ricardi*, a chronicle of the Third Crusade, Raymond "intended to betray his people, as he had agreed with Saladin... [and] right at the moment of engagement, the aforesaid Count of Tripoli fell back and feigned flight. It was rumoured that he did this in order to break up our formation and that he had agreed to abandon his own people, to strike fear into those whom he should have assisted, while arousing the enemy's courage."

This desertion of perhaps 300 knights, a quarter of the crusaders' most potent fighting strength, was the decisive moment.

After the battle of Hattin, Christian defenders at Tyre held out against Saladin's army, as depicted in this 15th-century miniature. Raymond failed in his bid to seize the castle and was forced to flee



Ibn al-Athir wrote that: "When the count fled, their spirits collapsed and they were near to surrendering." According to the chronicler Michael the Syrian, "after the departure of the count, the Franks were like unto men who had lost all hope". The *Old French Continuation of William of Tyre* agrees that, after Raymond's troops left, "Saladin vanquished them quickly. Between the hours of terce and nones [9am and 3pm] he won the entire field."

Astonishingly, despite all the evidence, Raymond is normally perceived as a crusader hero. His divisive quest for power is interpreted as a worthy struggle against villainous warmongers such as Reynald de Châtillon. Even his flight from Hattin is seen as a result of the defeat, rather than a principal cause of it. Seduced by the pro-Raymond chroniclers William of Tyre and Ernoul, 20th-century historians feted the count as a wise statesman whose dealings with Saladin

Despite the evidence, Raymond is normally perceived as a crusader hero

represented a rapprochement between Christians and Muslims. Recent scholarship has gone some way to rebalancing this view, but not far enough – nor has it penetrated the general consciousness.

Raymond's reputation

After the battle of Hattin, the only city in the kingdom to resist Saladin's armies was Tyre, led by the defiant Conrad of Montferrat. Tripoli was not besieged – thanks, some

believed, to Raymond's pact with Saladin. Even as the crusader enterprise fell apart, the count persisted in his pursuit of power.

According to William of Newburgh, Raymond secretly made his way to Tyre to "corrupt the populace and seize the citadel". His aim was to oust Conrad, his new rival for supremacy over the last dregs of the crusader polity. Conrad foiled the attempt and Raymond fled, leaving some of his men behind "whom the zealous marquis condemned to be hanged, as manifest traitors to the name of Christ".

Raymond died soon afterwards – of grief and shame, chroniclers wrote. The count had ardently wished to rule the crusaders but, contrary to popular belief, no man had done more to bring about their defeat **H**

Jeffrey Lee is the author of *God's Wolf: The Life of the Most Notorious of All Crusaders, Reynald de Châtillon* (Atlantic Books, 2016)

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LIONHEART

KING OF WAR

On 25 March 1194, Richard I, the Lionheart, laid siege to Nottingham Castle. Intent on reasserting

his authority over England, the king directed the full force of his military genius and martial resources against this supposedly impregnable, rebel-held fortress.

Eleven days earlier, Richard had landed at Sandwich in Kent, setting foot on English soil for the first time in more than four years. During the Lionheart's prolonged absence – first waging a gruelling crusade in the Holy Land, then enduring imprisonment at the hands of political rivals in Austria and Germany – his devious younger brother, John, had sought to seize power. Richard thus returned to a realm threatened by insurrection and, though John himself soon scuttled across the Channel, Nottingham remained an outpost of those championing his dubious cause.

King Richard I fell upon the stronghold with chilling efficiency. He arrived at the head of a sizeable military force, and possessed the requisite tools to crack Nottingham's stout defences, having summoned siege machines and stone-throwing trebuchets from Leicester, 22 carpenters from Northampton, and his master engineer, Urric, from London. The castle's garrison offered stern resistance, but on the first day of fighting the outer battlements fell. As had become his custom, Richard threw himself into the fray wearing only light mail armour and an iron cap, though he was protected from a rain of arrows and crossbow bolts by a number of heavy shields borne by his bodyguards. By evening, we



Richard wrestles with a lion in this illumination from the *Peterborough Psalter*, produced c1220, two decades after the king's death

are told, many of the defenders were left "wounded and crushed", and a number of prisoners had been taken.

Having made a clear statement of intent, the Lionheart sent messengers to the garrison in the morning, instructing them to capitulate to their rightful king. At first they refused, apparently unconvinced that Richard had indeed returned. In response, the Lionheart deployed his trebuchets, then ordered gibbets to be raised and hanged a number of his captives in full sight of the fortress. Surrender followed shortly thereafter. Accounts vary as to the treatment subsequently meted out to the rebels: one chronicler maintained that they were spared by the

"compassionate" king because he was "so gentle and full of mercy", but other sources make it clear that at least two of John's hated lackeys met their deaths soon after (one being imprisoned and starved, the other flayed alive).

With this victory Richard reaffirmed the potent legitimacy of his kingship, and support for John's cause in England collapsed. The work of repairing the grave damage inflicted by John's machinations on his family's extensive continental lands would take years – the majority of Richard's remaining life, in fact – but the lion-hearted ruler had returned to the west in spectacular fashion. Few could doubt that he was now the warrior-king par excellence – a fearsome opponent unrivalled among the crowned monarchs of Europe.

As a meticulous logician and a visionary strategist, the Lionheart could out-think his enemy; but he also loved frontline combat

Martial genius

Richard I's skills as a warrior and a general have long been recognised – though, for much of the 20th century, it was his supposedly intemperate and bloodthirsty brutality

TIMELINE Richard the Lionheart: life of a crusader king

8 September 1157

Richard is born, the son of Henry II of England and Eleanor of Aquitaine, founders of the Angevin dynasty

June 1172

Invested as Duke of Aquitaine in the abbey church of St Hilary in Poitiers

11 June 1183

His elder brother dies. Richard becomes heir to the English crown and Angevin realm (including Normandy and Anjou)

Autumn 1187

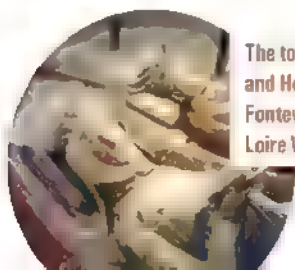
Saladin reconquers Jerusalem. Richard is the first nobleman north of the Alps to take the cross for the Third Crusade

3 September 1189

Having rebelled against his father Henry's authority and hounded the old king to his death, Richard is crowned king

4 July 1190

Sets out on crusade to the Holy Land, leaving his younger brother John, in Europe



The tombs of Eleanor and Henry II at Fontevraud Abbey, Loire Valley, France

A 14th-century image of Richard's coronation at Westminster Abbey





King Richard oversees the beheading of 2,700 Muslims following a breakdown in negotiations with Saladin after the siege of Acre, 1191

Summer 1191

Richard seizes Acre from Saladin's forces. He marches to Jaffa, defeating the Muslim army at Arsuf en route

2 September 1192

After abortive attempts on Jerusalem, Richard agrees peace with Saladin

December 1192

Travelling home, Richard is seized by Leopold of Austria, then held by Henry VI of Germany until 1194

26 March 1194

Richard takes Nottingham Castle. His brother John's cause in England collapses

1196–98

Richard spends £12,000 on Chateau Gaillard, which helps him reassert Angevin dominance in northern France

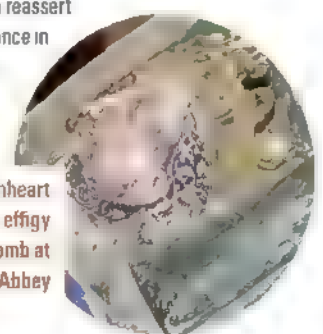
6 April 1199

Richard dies during the siege of Chalus

A 15th-century representation of Saladin. Richard's great Muslim rival



Richard the Lionheart depicted in an effigy on his tomb at Fontevraud Abbey





that was emphasised, with one scholar describing him as a "peerless killing machine". In recent decades a strong case has been made for the Lionheart's more clinical mastery of the science of medieval warfare, and today he is often portrayed as England's *rex bellicosus* (warlike king).

Current assessments of Richard's military achievements generally present his early years as Duke of Aquitaine (from 1172) as the decisive and formative phase in his development as a commander. Having acquired and honed his skills, it is argued, he was perfectly placed to make his mark on the Third Crusade, waging a holy war to recover Palestine from the Muslim sultan Saladin. The contest for control of Jerusalem

between these two titans of medieval history is presented as the high point of Richard I's martial career – the moment when he forged his legend.

However, this approach understates some issues while overplaying others. He embarked on the crusade on 4 July 1190 as a recently crowned and relatively untested king. Years of intermittent campaigning had given him a solid grounding in the business of war – particularly in the gritty realities of raiding and siege-craft – but to begin with, at least, no one would have expected Richard to lead in the holy war. That role naturally fell to Emperor Frederick Barbarossa of Germany, Europe's elder statesman and veteran campaigner, and it was only Barbarossa's unfortunate death through drowning en route to the Levant that opened the door for the Lionheart.

Arguably, the extent and significance of Richard's achievements in the Holy Land have also been exaggerated. True, he brought the crusader siege of Acre to a swift and successful conclusion in July 1191, but he did so only in alliance with his sometime-rival King Philip Augustus of France (of the Capetian dynasty). The victory over Saladin's forces later that year at the battle of Arsuf, on 7 September, appears on closer inspection to have been an unplanned and inconclusive encounter, while Richard's decision to twice advance to within 12 miles of Jerusalem, only to retreat on both occasions without mounting an assault, suggests that he had failed to grasp, much less harness, the distinctive devotional impulse that drove crusading armies.

This is not to suggest that Richard's

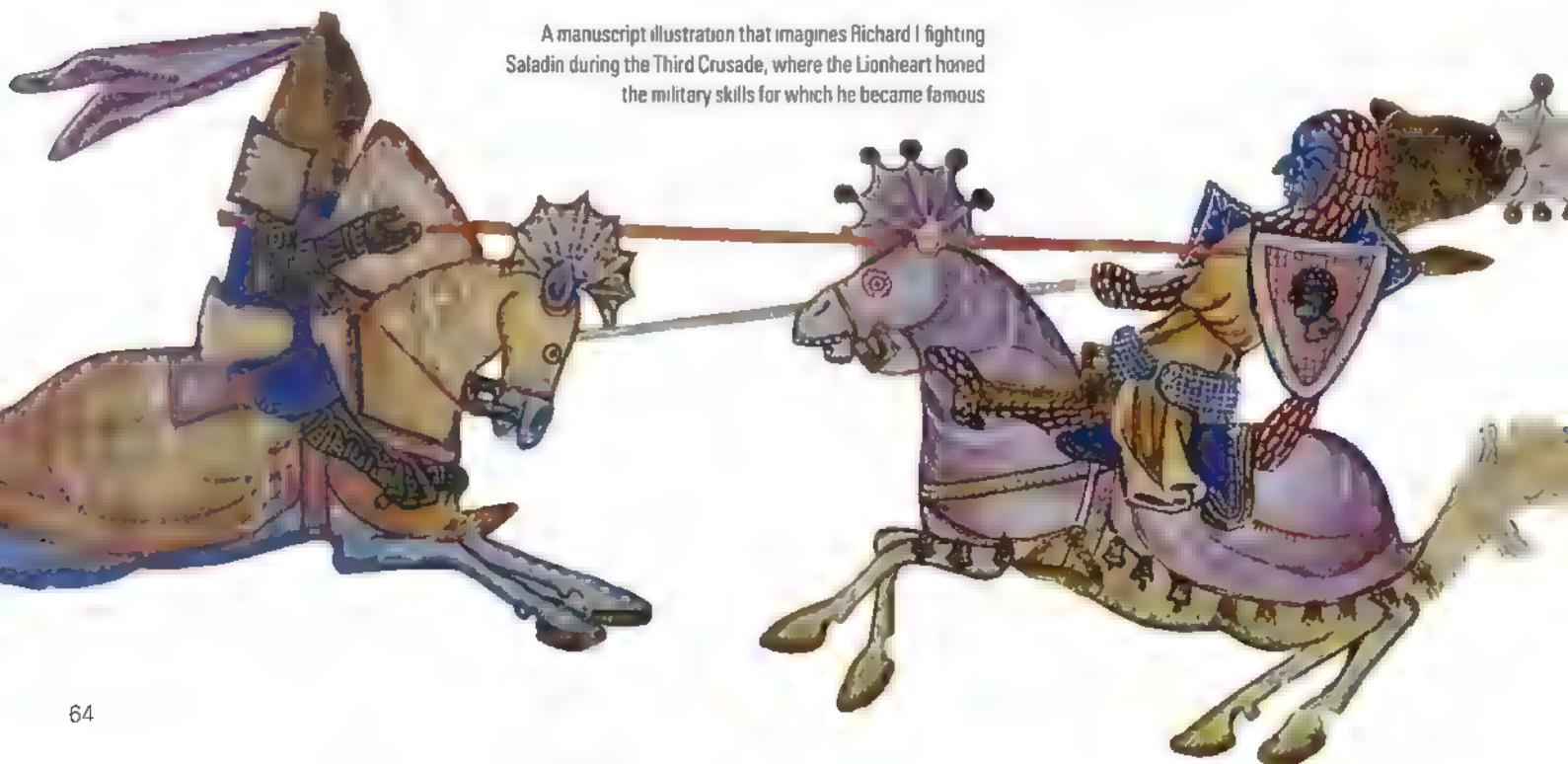
He returned to the west having acquired a new depth of experience and insight... putting the lessons to good use as he strove to subdue England

expedition should be regarded as a failure, nor to deny that his campaign was punctuated by moments of inspired generalship – most notably in leading his army on a fighting march through Muslim-held territory between Acre and Jaffa. Rather, it is to point out that the Lionheart was still sharpening his skills in Palestine. The Third Crusade ended in stalemate in September 1192, but it was in the fires of this holy war, as Richard and Saladin fought one another to a standstill, that the English king tempered his martial genius.

He returned to the west having acquired a new depth of experience and insight, and proved only too capable of putting the lessons learned in the Levant to good use as he strove first to subdue England, and then to reclaim the likes of Normandy and Anjou from Philip of France. It is this period, between 1194 and 1198, which should rightly be recognised as the pinnacle of Richard I's military career.

By the time he reached England in March

A manuscript illustration that imagines Richard I fighting Saladin during the Third Crusade, where the Lionheart honed the military skills for which he became famous



1194, the 36-year-old king had matured into an exceptionally well-rounded commander. A meticulous logician and a cool-headed, visionary strategist, the Lionheart could out-think his enemy; but he also loved frontline combat and possessed an exuberant self-confidence and inspirational charisma, allied to a grim but arguably necessary streak of ruthlessness.

All of these qualities were immediately apparent when Richard marched on rebel-held Nottingham. This veteran of the siege of Acre – one of the hardest-fought investments of the Middle Ages – understood the value of careful planning, the decisive capability of heavy siege machinery and the morale-sapping impact of calculated violence. Though one contemporary claimed Nottingham Castle was “so well fortified by nature and artifice” that it seemed “unconquerable”, Richard brought its garrison to the point of surrender within two days. Other striking successes in siege warfare followed, not least when the Lionheart captured the mighty fortress of Loches (in Touraine) in just three hours through a blistering frontal assault.

Sparring with the enemy

While campaigning on the continent to recover Angevin territory from Philip Augustus, Richard also demonstrated a remarkably acute appreciation of the precepts governing military manoeuvres and engagements. During the crusade he had sparred with Saladin's forces on numerous occasions, through fighting marches, exploratory raids and in the course of the first, incremental advance inland towards Jerusalem, conducted in the autumn of 1191.

This hard-won familiarity with the subtleties of troop movements and martial incursion served the Lionheart well when, in the early summer of 1194, Philip Augustus advanced west towards the town of Vendôme (on the border between the Angevin realm and Capetian territory) and began to threaten the whole of the Loire Valley.

Richard responded by marching into the region in early July. Vendôme itself was not fortified, so he threw up a defensive camp in front of the town. The two armies, seemingly well-matched in numerical terms, were now separated by only a matter of miles. Though Philip remained blissfully unaware, from the moment the Lionheart took up a position before Vendôme, the Capetians (French) were in grave danger. Should the French king attempt to initiate a frontal assault on the Angevin encampment, he would have to lead his troops south-west down the road to Vendôme, leaving the Capetian host exposed

A 14th-century French manuscript depicts Acre's eventual capture. After taking the city, Richard led a daring fighting march towards Jerusalem.



Three kings square up to Saladin

THE THIRD CRUSADE (1189–92)

On 4 July 1187, the Muslim sultan Saladin inflicted a crushing defeat on the crusader kingdom of Jerusalem's army in the battle of Hattin, capturing the kingdom's monarch, Guy de Lusignan, and the Christians' revered relic of the True Cross. Saladin went on to seize control of Jerusalem itself on 2 October.

These ruinous setbacks sent shockwaves through western Europe, prompting the pope to launch a new call to arms for what would come to be known as the Third Crusade. Tens of thousands of Christians enlisted, including King Philip II of France and Richard the Lionheart, who soon ascended to the English throne.

Nonetheless, the crusade's first attack was launched by King Guy in late August 1189, shortly after his release from captivity. Guy laid siege to the strategically significant Muslim-held port of Acre (today in northern Israel) and, against all odds, his force survived Saladin's best attempts to drive it from the field. Over the next two years, successive waves of crusader reinforcements arrived

from Europe. After the kings of France and England reached the Levant, Acre finally fell on 12 July 1191.

Having helped to secure this initial victory, Philip II elected to return home, leaving King Richard to direct what remained of the crusade. Fearing a loss of momentum, the Lionheart controversially executed some 2,700 Muslim captives outside Acre on 20 August 1191, before leading his army on a daring fighting march down the coast of Palestine, repelling a major Muslim assault at the battle of Arsuf on 7 September.

Richard went on to attempt two sustained advances inland towards the Holy City, but on both occasions he turned back without launching an assault, perhaps fearing the collapse of his supply lines. Ultimately, the crusade ended in stalemate when the two sides agreed terms in the Treaty of Jaffa on 2 September 1192. Richard secured control of a thin strip of coastal territory, but failed to recover the True Cross and, perhaps most importantly of all, left Jerusalem in Saladin's hands.

Richard drew on his crusading expertise when devising Chateau Gaillard ('Castle of Impudence') in the Norman Vexin



ALAMY

to flanking and encircling manoeuvres. However, any move by the French to retreat from the frontline would be an equally risky proposition, as they would be prone to attack from the rear and might easily be routed.

At first, King Philip sought to intimidate Richard, dispatching an envoy on 3 July to warn that a French offensive would soon be launched. Displaying a disconcerting confidence, the Lionheart apparently replied that he would happily await the Capetians' arrival, adding that, should they not appear, he would pay them a visit in the morning. Unsettled by this brazen retort, Philip wavered over his next step.

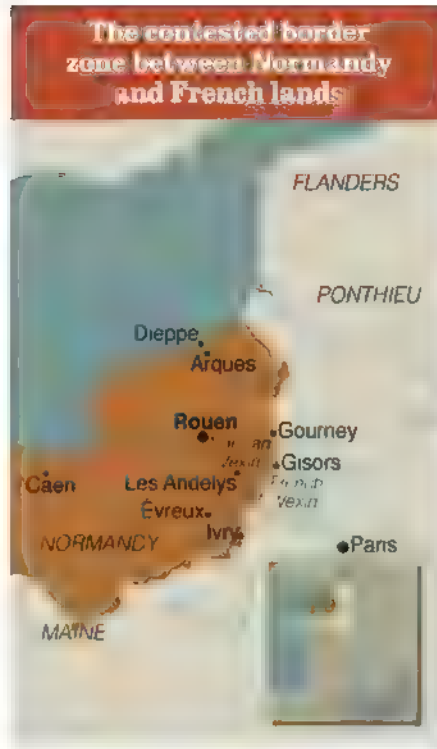
When the Angevins initiated an advance the following day, the French king's nerve broke and he ordered a hurried withdrawal north-east, along the road to Fréteval (12 miles from Vendôme). Though eager to harry his fleeing opponent, Richard shrewdly recognised that he could ill-afford a headlong pursuit that might leave his own troops in disarray, perilously exposed to counterattack. The Lionheart therefore placed one of his most trusted field lieutenants, William Marshal, in command of a reserve force, with orders to shadow the main advance, yet hold back from the hunt itself and thus be ready to counter any lingering Capetian resistance.

Having readied his men, Richard began his chase around midday on 4 July. Towards dusk, Richard caught up with the French rearguard and wagon train near Fréteval, and as the Angevins fell on the broken Capetian ranks, hundreds of enemy troops were slain or taken prisoner. A wealth of plunder was seized, ranging from "pavilions, all kinds of tents, cloth of scarlet and silk, plate and coin" to "horses, palfreys, pack-horses, sumptuous garments and money", chroniclers wrote. Many of Philip Augustus's personal possessions were appropriated, including a portion of the Capetian royal archives. It was a desperately humiliating defeat.

Richard hunted the fleeing French king through the night, using a string of horses to speed his pursuit, but when Philip pulled off the road to hide in a small church, Richard rode by. It was a shockingly narrow escape for the Capetian. The Angevins returned to Vendôme near midnight, laden with booty and leading a long line of prisoners.

The power of a castle

By the end of 1198, after long years of tireless campaigning and adept diplomacy, Richard had recovered most of the Angevin dynasty's territorial holdings on the continent. One crucial step in the process of restoration was the battle for dominion over the Norman



He was the foremost military commander of his generation – a *rex bellicosus* whose martial gifts were refined in the Holy Land

Vexin – the long-contested border zone between the duchy of Normandy and the Capetian-held Île-de-France. Philip Augustus had seized this region in 1193–94, while Richard still remained in captivity, occupying a number of castles, including the stronghold at Gisors. Long regarded as the linchpin of the entire Vexin, this fortress was all but impregnable. It boasted a fearsome inner keep enclosed within an imposing circuit of outer battlements and, even more importantly, could rely upon swift reinforcement by French troops should it ever be subject to enemy assault.

The Lionheart was uniquely qualified to attempt the Vexin's reconquest. In the Holy Land, he had painstakingly developed a line of defensible fortifications along the route linking Jaffa and Jerusalem. Later, he dedicated himself to re-establishing the battlements at Ascalon, because the port was critical to the balance of power between Palestine and Egypt. Richard might already have possessed a fairly shrewd appreciation of a castle's use and value before the crusade,

but by the time he returned to Europe there can have been few commanders with a better grasp of this dimension of medieval warfare.

Drawing upon this expertise, Richard immediately recognised that, in practical terms, Gisors was invulnerable to direct attack. As a result, he formulated an inspired, two-fold strategy, designed to neutralise Gisors and reassert Angevin influence over the Vexin. First, he built a vast new military complex on the Seine at Les Andelys (on the Vexin's western edge) that included a fortified island, a dock that made the site accessible to shipping from England and a looming fortress christened 'Château Gaillard' – the 'Castle of Impudence', or 'Cheeky Castle'. Built in just two years, 1196–98, the project cost an incredible £12,000, far more than Richard spent on fortifications in all of England over the course of his entire reign.

Les Andelys protected the approaches to the ducal capital of Rouen, but more importantly it also functioned as a staging post for offensive incursions into the Vexin. For the first time, it allowed large numbers of Angevin troops to be billeted on the fringe of this border zone in relative safety, and the Lionheart set about using these forces to dominate the surrounding region. Though the Capetians retained control of Gisors, alongside a number of other strongholds in the Vexin, their emasculated garrisons were virtually unable to venture beyond their gates, because the Angevins based out of Les Andelys were constantly ranging across the landscape.

One chronicler observed that the French were "so pinned down [in their] castles that they could not take anything outside", and troops in Gisors itself were unable even to draw water from their local spring. By these steps, King Richard reaffirmed Angevin dominance in northern France, shifting the balance of power back in his favour.

In the end, Richard's penchant for siege warfare and frontline skirmishing cost him his life. One of the greatest warrior-kings of the Middle Ages was killed by a crossbow bolt in 1199 while besieging an insignificant Aquitanean fortress. The Lionheart's death, at just 41, seemed to contemporaries, as it does today, a shocking and pointless waste. Nonetheless, he was the foremost military commander of his generation – a *rex bellicosus* whose martial gifts were forged in the Holy Land. ■

Thomas Asbridge is reader in medieval history at Queen Mary, University of London. His books include *Richard I: The Crusader King* (Allen Lane, 2018)

HOW TO LEAD LIKE SALADIN

You don't unite the Muslim world and strike fear into the west's fanatical crusaders without being an exceptional ruler. **John Man** reveals the eight qualities that made Saladin one of the greatest of them all





SALADIN'S CV

BORN: To a family of Kurdish ancestry in Tikrit (modern-day Iraq), in c1137/38

BEST REMEMBERED FOR: Defeating a crusader army at the 1187 battle of Hattin (present-day Israel) and seizing Jerusalem from the crusaders later that year

OTHER KEY ACHIEVEMENTS: Establishing a mighty Muslim empire that encompassed today's Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel, Yemen and the Palestinian territories

REVERED BY: The Muslim world, especially his fellow Sunnis. But he was also greatly respected by his sworn enemies, the crusaders, who it is said regarded him as highly as their own leaders

DIED: Of a fever in Damascus in 1193

BURIED: In the Umayyad Mosque, Damascus

Saladin, seen here in a 12th-century portrait, led Muslim opposition to the crusaders and united much of the Middle East



Saladin's achievements in bringing together much of the Middle East under one vast Muslim empire, and crushing a crusader army in 1187, mark him out as one of history's most accomplished leaders. Here are the eight secrets behind his incredible success...



Nur al-Din (right), who wanted to unify Islam, was an inspiration to the young Saladin

1 Learn from the best

An inspirational ruler and a warrior uncle were key to Saladin's rise

One key to Saladin's leadership skills surely lay in his childhood. This is an assumption, for almost nothing is known about the young Saladin. But something can be deduced from his later success. He was raised in a violent world, yet gained emotional security from religion and family.

In *Outliers*, his 2008 book analysing attributes that distinguish the most successful people from the rest, Malcolm Gladwell points out that a key element in a person's rise to greatness is a mentor or guiding light – someone who provides both an example and a helping hand.

His father provided for his

emotional security, then Saladin's two mentors were Shirkuh, his warlike uncle, and Nur al-Din, the inspirational ruler of Aleppo and Mosul, anti-crusader, would-be unifier of Islam, and Saladin's master and employer.

It was Nur al-Din who gave Saladin his big break and sent him off with an army to Egypt, his idea being that Egypt's wealth would provide a basis for unifying Islam and confronting the crusaders. Without Shirkuh and Nur al-Din – one a campaigner, the other a ruler – Saladin could have remained insignificant.

2 Show no mercy

One of the most effective weapons in Saladin's armoury was the capacity to brutalise

Leadership is often equated with ruthlessness. One exponent of this was the Chinese theorist of leadership Lord Shang, writing when China was torn by rival states in about 400 BC. He advised rulers that human beings are idle, greedy, cowardly, treacherous and foolish, and the only way to deal with them is to entice, terrify, reward and punish. Two thousand years later, Machiavelli, confronted by Italy's warring mini-states, made the same point, only the ruthless exercise of power can guarantee the peaceful continuity of the state.

In some circumstances, Saladin too knew how to use force, even brutality. His new position in Egypt presented problems. Sunni Syrians and Shia Egyptians were old rivals. Each despised the other. Each had a caliph. In Egypt, Saladin could rule only by force and duplicity. He collaborated in the murder of the vizier (a high-ranking minister) Shawar, built up a formidable army and bullied the young Egyptian caliph, Al-Azid, into naming him vizier with power over both government and armed forces. He also engineered plots, arrested and tortured the plotters, and dismissed troublesome members of the Egyptian army and palace guards. Then he ended the Cairo-based caliphate, scattered the caliph's library, divided Cairo's palaces among his family, crushed revolts – even crucifying two ringleaders in central Cairo – and spread his control to Yemen.

Later, after the battle of Hattin, one of his captives was French crusader Reynald de Châtillon, a man he had sworn to kill in revenge for his brutal and treacherous behaviour. In one account, Saladin beheaded him with one stroke of his sword. Soon afterwards, volunteers executed a further 200 captives, while Saladin looked on approvingly.

Saladin, shown beheading the captive Reynald de Châtillon, was not afraid to use force



A 13th-century French manuscript shows Saladin's troops wreaking devastation on the Holy Land, taking prisoners and stealing cattle

4 Be prepared to negotiate

Saladin quickly learned that he couldn't always bludgeon his way to power

But now what? Egypt's wealth was the key to power, but the door to Islamic unity and jihad was Syria. By about 1170, it was obvious that Saladin was a rival to his master, Nur al-Din. There could have been civil war – except that the two shared the same vision, and both held back from outright confrontation for three years.

Then Nur al-Din's death gave Saladin a chance to claim his former master's realm. This would not be easy, because major cities – Damascus, Aleppo, Mosul, Homs, Hama, Baalbek – were held by Nur al-Din's heirs or allies. It was now that Saladin's leadership skills came to the fore. He became an expert in what leadership theorists call 'soft power', in which persuasion trumps force.

His task was to usurp power, while pretending deference to Nur al-Din's lineage. There was no point forcing himself on other Muslims, if by doing so he turned them from rivals into enemies. If he besieged a city, he did so with restraint. In victory, he took care not to pursue, slaughter and pillage. He often wrote to the caliph in Baghdad, asking for his backing.

It took 10 years of steps forward, steps back, negotiations, appeals and shows of force followed by displays of magnanimity – but in the end it worked. The caliph granted him a 'diploma of investiture', and Saladin became ruler of Syria as well as Egypt. He had the legitimacy he needed to turn his unified army against the crusaders, achieving his stunning victory in the battle of Hattin in 1187 and following this up by seizing Jerusalem.

Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of his soft leadership was that he applied it in his dealings with his enemies. He probed, retreated, consulted, negotiated, exchanged prisoners, changed his mind with changing circumstances, and dealt courteously with his enemies. He acted like this partly because that was his character, and partly because it worked, saving much fruitless fighting and unnecessary losses.

3 Have a cause worth fighting for

Saladin's rallying cry – holy war – proved irresistible to thousands of his followers

From his youth, Saladin was in some sense programmed for leadership, which he seized in Egypt. For his next move, he needed to inspire. One vital element for a leader – some say the most vital – is the agenda, the vision. Effective leaders need a noble cause, something bigger than the leader himself.

As psychologist Daniel Goleman and his co-authors comment in *Primal Leadership: Unleashing the Power of Emotional Intelligence* (2013), those with vision "exude resonance: they have genuine passion for their mission, and that passion is contagious".

Saladin's vision was powerful and simple: an Islamic world unified and free of the non-Islamic, anti-Islamic

crusaders. He did not even have to originate it. The cause had been in the air for a generation, since the arrival of the crusaders in 1096. His mentor, Nur al-Din, had preached jihad – or holy war – against them.

Saladin took up the cry: "Do battle not for my cause, but for God's cause."

His vision was powerful and simple: an Islamic world unified and free of the crusaders

5 Put your life on the line

To inspire true loyalty, Saladin was prepared to go where only the bravest would follow

Another element of Saladin's rule was his readiness to share adversity. The nature of revolutionary leadership demands it. In the words of the American political scientist James MacGregor Burns: "The leaders must be absolutely dedicated to the cause and able to demonstrate that commitment by giving time and effort to it, risking their



A statue of Saladin in Damascus, 2011

lives, undergoing imprisonment, exile, persecution and continual hardship." Saladin risked his life in battle, and at the age of 50 almost died from a disease caught while campaigning.

Shared suffering does not guarantee success, but a refusal to do so may open the door to failure. Saladin is in good company here. Successful revolutionary leaders who suffered for their causes include Alexander, Jesus, Muhammad, Genghis Khan, Mao Zedong, Lenin, Fidel Castro and Nelson Mandela.

6 Live a simple, austere life

The most powerful man in the Muslim world resisted the temptation to amass riches

Embracing danger is one way of demonstrating your willingness to share your followers' pain. Another is to refuse the urge to amass riches. This is a rare quality, because it works best in combination with adversity. Kublai Khan ruled China with a massive display of wealth. However, his grandfather Genghis Khan, from whom Kublai inherited a vision of world rule, made a virtue of austerity, adopting the guise of a simple Taoist sage: "In the clothes I wear or the meats I eat, I have the same rags and the same food as the cowherd or the groom."

Saladin too considered his followers before himself – so much so that in life he was often rebuked by his treasurer, and in death had nothing to his name but his sword, coat of mail and horse. He built himself no palaces, and wanted only a small mausoleum.



7 Keep your promises

Trust was the key to building a stable alliance against the crusader armies

Saladin kept his word. Lord Shang and Machiavelli were all for duplicity, if it served the leader's purpose. That was not Saladin's way. Keeping promises is a fundamental attribute of good leadership, for without it the trust of allies and those further down the chain of command vanishes, morale plummets and concerted action becomes impossible. This creates what Daniel Goleman refers to as a "toxic organisation", in which "resonance" gives way to "dissonance". "If we refuse what we have promised and are not generous with the benefits," said Saladin, "no one will ever trust us again."

Like his contemporary Genghis Khan, Saladin made a virtue of austerity



Saladin could be magnanimous. This image shows him taking Jerusalem in 1187, but not before he had the wife of one of the crusaders escorted to safety.

Despite his commitment to jihad, Saladin retained his respect for individuals



⑧ Extend the hand of friendship

The great nemesis of the crusaders showed them surprising acts of generosity

Despite his commitment to jihad, Saladin retained his respect for individuals – as was proven in the following incident, which happened in the summer of 1187, between the battle of Hattin in July and the seizure of Jerusalem in October

Balian of Ibelin, head of one of the most prominent of crusader families, escaped from Hattin and took refuge in Tyre. With Saladin's army controlling the surrounding territory,

Balian's wife, Maria, was stuck in Jerusalem. Balian sent a message to Saladin, asking to be allowed to get her. Saladin agreed – on the understanding that Balian spent only one night in Jerusalem.

But when Balian arrived in the city he found it leaderless. He stayed to organise its defence, sending profuse apologies to Saladin for breaking his promise. Saladin chivalrously accepted the apology, and then sent an escort

to convey Maria to Tyre, while her husband set about finishing Jerusalem's defences. Such actions won Saladin the admiration of his Christian enemies, who came to think of him as more worthy than their own leaders. **II**

John Man is a historian and travel writer whose books include *Saladin: The Life, the Legend and the Islamic Empire* (Bantam Press, 2015)

THE KNIGHTS TEMPLAR GOD'S ELITE WARRIORS



Dan Jones tells the story of
a crack unit of holy hard-men
who spent 200 years defending
Jerusalem from the Muslims.



An ancient depiction of the Battle of Hattin, 1187. The knight in the foreground is a Templar – the Knights Templar – pursuing an enemy of the cross.

On a punishingly hot day at the start of July 1187, Saladin, the sultan of Egypt and Syria, stood beside his son al-Afdal and peered across the battlefield towards a red tent on a hill. The sultan's face was pale with worry. The armies before him had been fighting for hours, tortured by near-unbearable heat, dust and smoke, which billowed up from the desert scrub Saladin's own men had set alight. Thousands of men and horses lay dead. The enemy – a vast force led by the Christian king Guy of Jerusalem – was badly battered and falling back, but until the king's red pavilion fell, victory would not be complete.

Al-Afdal, youthful and bullish, cheered every Christian charge that the Muslim army repulsed. Saladin scolded him. "Be quiet!" he said. "We have not beaten them until that tent falls." Moments later, the sultan's angst turned to tearful jubilation. The tent collapsed, King Guy was captured and the battle of Hattin was over. The Christians' holiest relic – a fragment of the True Cross – was seized. The dead were left to rot where they lay, while the living were led off in disgrace: the lowliest Christian prisoners destined for slavery, the more valuable for ransom.

But there was one category of captives who received quite different treatment from all the rest. A reward of 50 dinars was offered to anyone who could present the sultan with a member of the military orders: Hospitallers and Templars. These knights and sergeants were the elite special forces within the armies of the cross. They were the most dedicated and highly trained warriors in the Holy Land. And Saladin had special plans for them.

These knights and sergeants were the elite special forces within the armies of the cross – the most dedicated and highly trained warriors in the Holy Land

In 1187, the Order of the Poor Knights of the Temple of Solomon was about 68 years old. The Order had first been assembled in 1119 at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem by a French knight called Hugh de Payns. Hugh had travelled to the east around the time that Jerusalem fell to the Christian armies of the First Crusade, and he stayed there, seeking a way to combine his skill as a soldier with his yearning for religious purpose.

With a small number of like-minded men – later accounts said there were nine – Hugh established a brotherhood of religious warriors: skilled fighters who took oaths of chastity and poverty. They dedicated themselves to protecting Christian pilgrims on roads around the holy city, which were menaced by brigands preying on vulnerable travellers touring unfamiliar countryside.

This fraternity of holy hard-men soon gained official recognition. The then-ruler of Jerusalem, Baldwin II put them up in al-Aqsa Mosque, which they identified with the biblical temple built by Solomon. This was how the Templars gained their name.

Papal tax breaks

For survival, the brothers relied on charitable handouts, and they quickly became expert at soliciting these – particularly in western Europe, where they built up a large



The seal of the Knights Templar, who were, according to one Muslim chronicler, "the fiercest fighters of all the Franks"

The Knights Templar were able to fight across all terrains. They were the equivalent of the SAS, the Navy SEALs or the French Foreign Legion

network of profitable estates donated by supporters of the crusading movement.

In the 1120s, the order was granted a quasi-monastic rule to live by, designed by the Cistercian abbot Bernard of Clairvaux. In the 1130s, the pope granted them sweeping tax breaks and an official uniform of white or black tunics emblazoned with a cross.

By the 1140s, the Templars had begun to expand their mission of merely providing roadside rescue for pilgrims. In parallel with the Hospitallers, who branched out from providing medical services in Jerusalem to assuming military duties, the Templars manned castles throughout the Holy Land and assisted in raids on Muslim cities such as Damascus.

At the other end of the Mediterranean they had been drafted into the *Reconquista*: the Christian campaigns for control of the Muslim states of al-Andalus, in today's southern Spain. The Templars were by now a self-sustaining paramilitary organisation, a crack squad of hardened and dedicated soldiers, able to fight across all terrains and oath-bound to serve God and their brothers. In modern terms, they were the equivalent of the SAS, the Navy SEALs or the French Foreign Legion.

"They were the fiercest fighters of all the Franks," wrote the Muslim chronicler Ibn al-Athir about the Templars. (By 'Franks', he



Saladin captures a relic of the True Cross from a crusader army at the battle of Hattin in 1187, as depicted in Matthew Paris's *Chronica Majora*. After the victory, the Muslim leader would inflict a terrible vengeance on the Knights Templar

The rise and fall of the Templars

1119

Hugh de Payns and eight other knights band together in Jerusalem, agreeing to protect Christian pilgrims outside the city walls.

1129

Pope Honorius III issues a papal bull, *Omnia in christi fide*, which encourages military and military exercise, and banned from knightly frivolities such as hunting with birds or wearing pointed shoes.

1134

Alfonso I 'the Battler', King of Aragon, dies and leaves one-third of his kingdom to the Templars, drawing the order into the *Reconquista*.

A coin depicting Alfonso I and, on the reverse, a cross.



Templars wear their distinctive uniforms in a French mural.

1139

Pope Innocent II decrees that the Templars are only answerable to papal authority.

1148

The French army all the way to the Holy Land.



A 14th-century illustration shows Guy de Lusignan.

1187

On 4 July, Saladin defeats a huge Christian army at the battle of Hattin. He then orders the summary beheading of all Templars captured by his forces.



A medieval manuscript of the battle of Hattin, showing the Templars.

1191

Richard I of England captures Cyprus and sells it to the Templars. But he quickly sells it on to Guy de Lusignan, the former king of Jerusalem.

c1200

The Templars are the defenders of a mysterious item known as the Holy Grail.

1218

The Templars join the Fifth Crusade in the Nile Delta, fighting on board armoured galleys.

1291

Mamluk armies attack the last crusader outpost in the city of Acre. The Templar master Guillaume de Beaujeu is killed leading the defence.

1307

On Friday 13 October, agents working for King Philip IV arrest every Templar in France. In 1312, the order is disbanded and its property confiscated.



Templars are arrested on the orders of the "cruel and conniving" French king Philip IV, in a scene from the 14th-century *Chroniques de France ou de St Denis*

Discipline was paramount. The order's famous black and white flag was only to be lowered when the last man defending it was dead

meant the western Christians in the Holy Land.) Ibn al-Athir was around 27 years old in 1187 and, like his contemporary Saladin, he knew just how competent – and dangerous – the Templars could be.

After all, history fairly buzzed with examples. In 1148, the Templars had saved the French armies of the Second Crusade from annihilation. Tens of thousands of ill-disciplined troops led by King Louis VII had tried to cross hostile territory in Asia Minor on foot and horseback, on their way to Syria, where they planned to liberate the city of Edessa. Bedraggled and badly led, they were prey to repeated attacks from Turkish horsemen, who inflicted a particularly terrible defeat on them at Mount Cadmus, near modern-day Denizli in Turkey. Hundreds were killed and Louis only escaped capture by hiding on a boulder.

In desperation, the French king handed over military command of the entire expedition to a Templar named Gilbert. He was one of only 50 or so brothers among the vast procession, but Gilbert's leadership was inspired. He divided the pilgrims into battalions, each with a single brother in

charge. All the able-bodied were given a crash-course in military conduct, and shown how to hold their shape and discipline under attack. As a result, the French survived the hard trek east, and on arrival in the Holy Land the Templars even raised an emergency loan to keep Louis's troubled campaign afloat.

In the years that followed, the Templars were trusted to defend castles around Gaza in the south, where Christian territory gave way to Egyptian lands. Further north they guarded the passes through the Amanus Mountains, which controlled the routes from Asia Minor into the Christian principality of Antioch. They advised secular leaders on military strategy, but were also pointedly independent, carrying out kidnapping missions and raids of their own as they pleased. Even the Assassins – the shadowy Shia terrorist sect who lived in the Syrian mountains and specialised in spectacular public assassinations of leaders of all faiths – would not touch the Templars, and paid them a fat fee to be left alone.

The Templar Rule, which originally resembled a Cistercian monk's order of daily routine, was heavily revised in around 1165 to become more of a military handbook: setting the Templars' battlefield protocols and emphasising the importance of discipline and obedience. The order's famous black and white flag was only to be lowered when the last man defending it was dead. "No brother should leave the field... while there is a piebald banner raised aloft; for if he leaves he will be expelled from the house for ever," it read.

When they rode into battle, the Templars sang a psalm: "Not to us, O lord, not to us, but to your name give the glory, for your steadfast love and faithfulness." The sight and sound of these men charging in their distinctive red-crossed cloaks was rightly feared throughout the Holy Land.

Suicidally proud

When Saladin's men had finished rounding up Templars and Hospitallers after the battle of Hattin in 1187, around 200 prisoners had been delivered. These included the Templar grand master, Gerard de Ridefort, an impulsive and suicidally proud leader who led his men into fights against impossible odds, yet somehow always emerged with his own life. He would do so again now, as Saladin ordered him to be imprisoned and exchanged for the Templars' castle at Gaza.

The rest were not so lucky. Saladin had witnessed the Templars' bravery at first hand several years previously, when the commander of their besieged fortress at Jacob's Ford met his death by deliberately riding

headlong into a burning section of the castle. Now, wrote his secretary and biographer Imad al-Din: "He wished to purify land of these... unclean orders, whose practices are useless, who never give up their hostility and who have no use as slaves... He ordered that each would have his head cut off and be erased from the land of the living."

Instead of committing the job to a professional headsman, Saladin asked for volunteers from his religious entourage. Sufis, lawyers and scholars stepped forward for the chance to decapitate an infidel, with predictably gruesome results. Some deaths were swift. Others were painful and slow, as inexperienced clerics hacked away with blunt blades and no technique. Many, wrote Imad al-Din, "proved themselves ridiculous and had to be replaced".

Saladin sent a letter to Baghdad containing news of his extermination of the Christian military orders. "Not one of the Templars survived," he wrote, with satisfaction. And he was very nearly correct.

The Templars fight back

Nearly, but not quite. It took several years for the Templars to rebuild their numbers and their military reputation, but they managed it. When Richard the Lionheart arrived in the Holy Land to lead the Third Crusade in 1191 he revived the order's fortunes, installing new leaders from his own entourage and ensuring that the Templars rode either at the vanguard or rearguard of his army as it marched down the coast from Acre to Jaffa, reclaiming cities Saladin had conquered. He briefly handed the Templars a military dictatorship on Cyprus, although they found the island ungovernable and sold it on. And when Richard left the Holy Land for Europe in 1192, he was said to have travelled incognito, wearing Templar uniform.

The order remained at the military heart of the crusades for another century. In 1218-19 they starred in the Fifth Crusade to Damietta in Egypt, deploying armoured galleys in the water of the Nile Delta as the Christian armies attempted an amphibious siege of the city. Two generations later they were back again, having helped fund and provision another crusader army with designs on Damietta, this time led by Louis IX of France. Throughout the 13th century, the Templars continued to be involved in the *Reconquista*, helping King James I of Aragon to conquer Ibiza and Mallorca between 1229 and 1235, and the kingdom of Valencia by 1244.

Then, at the end of the century, when the Christians were being swept from the Holy Land by an Egyptian slave-soldier regime



A 14th-century image showing Jacques de Molay, the Templars' last grand master, being burned at the stake. The order was at the heart of Christian crusading efforts for 200 years, but its collapse was shockingly swift.

called the Mamluks, the Templars provided the very last line of defence. Their huge fortress in Acre was the last bastion to hold out against Mamluk forces storming through the breached walls in 1291, in what turned out to be the crusaders' final stand.

In 1307, however, the order was destroyed by a cruel and conniving king of France, Philip IV. Philip used a popular wish for the Templars and Hospitallers to be merged into one military super-order as a pretext for investigating their practices and then confiscating their wealth. Their collapse was swift and dramatic, as the king's lawyers and papal inquisitors accused the brothers of corruption, blasphemy and sexual crimes. By 1312, the Templars had been disbanded. The last master, Jacques de Molay, was burned at the stake as a heretic in Paris in 1314.

Other orders survived the decline of crusading. The Hospitallers continued the fight against the church's enemies from a new base on the island of Rhodes, while the Teutonic Order governed a semi-autonomous state in Prussia for centuries. The Mamluks, who were themselves somewhat like an Islamic military order, ruled

Egypt and Syria until they were swept aside by the Ottomans in 1517.

Why did the Templars fall? Part of the answer lies in the weakness of their last master, Jacques de Molay; part in the ruthless caprice of Philip IV. But what is seldom noted is that the Templars, for all their wealth and privilege, never established for themselves a geographical base that they could defend against all assaults, even from their own side.

The brothers were famed for their bravery, dedication and piety, but these were not enough to save them when Philip IV attacked. Had they established themselves as the rulers of Cyprus when they had the chance in 1191, their history might have been different. But they did not, and the Knights Templars' shocking demise now dominates our memory of an order that was, in its day, better known by Ibn al-Athir's assessment: "The fiercest fighters of all the Franks." ■

Dan Jones is a historian, author and TV presenter. His books include *The Templars: The Rise and Spectacular Fall of God's Holy Warriors* (Viking, 2017).

LEGACY OF THE CRUSADES



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Why Islam crushed the crusaders

Thomas Asbridge explains why – for all their celebrated victories and burning religious zeal – the Christian warriors' attempts to wrest the Holy Land from Muslim control were ultimately doomed to failure



This illustration shows the
siege and capture of Antioch
in 1268, when Baybars'
mighty Mamluk army laid
the crusader city to waste.



At dawn on Friday 18 May 1291, a furious Muslim assault upon the crusader city of Acre began. This bustling, heavily fortified port in northern Palestine had been locked into a siege for more than a month: encircled by tens of thousands of Islamic troops; subjected to an aerial bombardment that brought hundred-pound boulders crashing down onto its battlements and buildings.

Now, on this last morning, the air resounded with the thunder of war drums as thousands of Muslims raced forward, and their archers loosed arrows "in a thick cloud" that, according to one Christian eyewitness, "seemed to fall like rain from the heavens". Driven forward by the immense momentum of their onslaught, the Muslims broke through two gates and began rushing into the city.

Sharing a vain last stand were the leaders of two elite Christian military orders. The master of the Templars was mortally wounded when a spear pierced his side, while his counterpart, the master of the Hospitallers, took a lance thrust between his shoulders and was dragged back from the walls, grievously injured. Before long, the defenders were overrun and the sack of Acre began. One Christian, then in the city, wrote that the "day was terrible to behold. The [ordinary people of the city] came fleeing through the streets, their children in their arms, weeping and despairing, and fleeing to sailors to save them from death." Hundreds were hunted down and slaughtered.

Acre's fall was a final and fatal disaster for the Christians of the crusader states – the western European settlements in the near east that had survived for almost two centuries. Within a few months, their remaining mainland outposts had been evacuated or abandoned. For the Muslims, by contrast, the victory at Acre affirmed the efficacy of their faith, sealing their triumph in the war for the Holy Land. Reflecting on the wonder of this event, a Muslim contemporary wrote:

"These conquests [meant that] the whole of Palestine was now in Muslim hands [and] purified of the Franks, who had once been on the point of conquering Egypt and subduing Damascus and other cities. Praise be to God!" The crusades had culminated in a categorical victory for Islam.

The crusading era had begun with a seemingly miraculous Christian success: the First Crusade's conquest of Jerusalem. Answering a papal call to arms, thousands of western European warriors had marched



This image from the c1286 *Histoire Universelle* shows Peter the Hermit, one of the church's leading advocates of the First Crusade (1096–99), at the head of a group of soldiers

across the face of the known world to reclaim the Holy City from its Islamic overlords. Perhaps 90 per cent of these original crusaders had been lost to death or desertion, but on 15 July 1099 a hardened core of survivors had forced their way into Jerusalem, butchering much of its Muslim population. In the years that followed, four crusader states – including the kingdom of Jerusalem – were forged.

Through the early decades of the 12th century these crusader states continued to expand, until they covered a swathe of territory stretching from modern-day Israel and Jordan, through Syria and Lebanon, to Turkey. Collectively, they came to be known by contemporaries as 'Outremer': the land beyond the sea. But a rising tide of Muslim

resistance and counterattack soon placed these isolated western satellites under pressure, and a succession of further crusades were launched from Europe to defend the Holy Land. Through eight major crusading expeditions – including the Third Crusade, during which Richard the Lionheart sought to defeat the mighty Muslim sultan Saladin – and scores of smaller crusading campaigns, hundreds of thousands of Christians fought to preserve this fragile foothold in the east.

Dramatic extinction

Nonetheless, the startling victories of the First Crusade were never repeated, and the strength and geographical extent of Outremer was gradually eroded until its dramatic extinction in 1291. So why did Islam prevail in this protracted struggle for dominion of the Holy Land?

Historians have sometimes suggested that Christendom was defeated because of a gradual slump in crusade enthusiasm after 1200, a malaise supposedly brought on by papal manipulation and dilution of the crusading 'ideal'. This view is somewhat simplistic. True, the 13th century did not witness the same massive expeditions that

Acre's fall was a final and fatal disaster for the Christians of the crusader states



Duant le Roy phile
 conueult se diffe
 rement du Roy
 Richard et que le
 temps d'acomplir son bonpoyr
 estoit conuenable k'entra
 lui et son armee, en mer
 et laissant le Roy Richard a
 meschines fit tant quil vint
 arriuer la beisse de pasques

deuant la cite d'ace . Pres
 de la quelle Il trouua les
 xpiens d'... tremer qui la
 uoient lonquemet attendus
 et qui le Receurent en sou
 ueraine Joye et menerent
 dedans leur ost et ou siege
 par eulx la grant temps
 maintenu combien quilz
 nauoient gaires prouffite



In these scenes from a c1450 book by Sebastian Mamerot, French troops under Philip II embark at Acre during the Third Crusade (top) and the English fleet under Richard I destroys an enemy ship



A papal legate presents a cross to Louis IX of France, who rose from his sickbed to lead a remarkable, if doomed, crusade to Egypt

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had punctuated the period between 1095 and 1193, but recruitment for a plethora of smaller-scale campaigns remained buoyant. Above all, the essential allure of the crusades – the idea of fighting to defend or reclaim sacred Christian territory in return for the reward of spiritual purification – seems to have remained largely undimmed. The call of the cross undoubtedly could still move the hearts and minds of the masses.

One popular outburst of ecstatic piety was witnessed in 1212, when large groups of children and young adults in northern France and Germany spontaneously began to declare their dedication to the cause of the crusades. In the 'Children's Crusade' that followed, hordes of youngsters began marching to the Mediterranean believing that God would oversee their journey to the Levant and then lend them the miraculous power to overthrow Islam and recapture Jerusalem. Unfortunately, the seas did not part to allow these children to walk to the

Holy Land and the whole venture collapsed. Undeterred, a similarly popular uprising was witnessed in the so-called 'Shepherds' Crusade' of 1251.

Yet, although the crusading fire still burned brightly, its force was frequently directed away from the defence of Outremer itself to combat new enemies in different theatres of conflict. In the course of the 13th century, the papacy launched numerous crusades against heretics in southern France, eastern European pagans and even its own political enemies within Italy.

Campaigns and resources were also channelled into the Christian reconquest of Iberia from the Moors and the defence of Constantinople (recently captured from the Byzantine Greeks). The lack of a singular focus on the Holy Land undoubtedly weakened the war effort in the Levant, but it would be a mistake to imagine that the 13th century passed without its own grand crusades to the east. Indeed, perhaps the

most remarkable of these expeditions was led by a king so pious and devoted to the war for the Holy Land that he would later be canonised by the Roman church as a saint.

From sickbed to sainthood

King Louis IX of France first vowed to go on crusade in December 1244, while in the grip of severe fever. The 30-year-old monarch was confined to his bed, and apparently close to death, when he "asked for the cross to be given to him" there and then. Once recovered, he stood by his promise, dedicating much of his life to the cause of holy war. Louis spent four years laying the most assiduous preparations for his campaign. Selecting Cyprus as his advance staging post, the king set about building up a supply of the food, weaponry and resources needed for war. After stockpiling goods on the island, the vast mounds of wheat and barley awaiting the crusade apparently resembled

Barber-surgeons moved through the ranks to cut away the scurvy-ridden gums of screaming soldiers

hills, while the stacks of wine barrels were, from a distance, easily mistaken for barns.

Louis' crusade targeted Egypt – the heartland of Muslim military and economic power – and began with a startling victory at the mouth of the Nile. On 5 June 1249, the king led around 20,000 crusaders in a desperately dangerous opposed beach landing near the town of Damietta. The troops guarding the coastline for the Ayyubid regime (Saladin's successors) buckled and fled in the face of the Christians' fierce, well-coordinated assault, and on the very next day Louis was able to occupy Damietta itself. This was the most stunning opening foray of any crusade.

In its wake, Louis marched his forces down a branch of the Nile to confront the main Ayyubid army at the town of Mansoura. On 8 February 1250, he launched a daring dawn raid on the Muslims camped in front of Mansoura. Catching the enemy unawares and asleep, the assault became a massacre. As this brutal riot overran the Ayyubid encampment, it seemed that a stunning victory was at hand, but at that moment the king's brother, Robert of Artois, made a woefully hot-headed decision to lead a large party of knights in pursuit of the Muslim stragglers fleeing towards Mansoura itself. Once they had charged into the town, Robert and his men found themselves trapped within a warren of confined alleyways and, falling prey to sniping spear and arrow attacks, they were annihilated almost to a man.

Louis IX's crusade never recovered from this setback. The king sought to hold his position before Mansoura for another three months, but food shortages and the ravages of disease brought his army to its knees. With the crusaders reduced to eating cats and dogs, barber-surgeons moving through the ranks to cut away the scurvy-ridden gums of screaming soldiers, and Louis afflicted with dysentery, a general retreat was ordered on 4 April. The withdrawal quickly turned into a rout and almost the entire force was either killed or taken captive.

In the midst of the mayhem, King Louis became separated from his troops. He now was so stricken with illness that he had to have a hole cut in his breeches. A small group of his most loyal retainers made a brave attempt to lead him to safety, and eventually they took refuge in a small village. There, cowering, half-dead, in a squalid hut, the mighty sovereign of France was captured. His daring attempt to reconquer the Holy Land had ended in catastrophe.

The fact that such a carefully planned crusade, led by a paragon of Christian kingship, had still been subjected to an excoriating defeat horrified western Europe and raised serious doubts about the efficacy of the crusading movement. And even as Christendom was faltering, a fearsome power that would bring Islam full victory in the east was just beginning to emerge.

A new Islamic dynasty – the Mamluk sultanate, governed by members of the mamluk (slave-soldier) military elite – seized power in Egypt in the wake of King Louis IX's failed crusade. Mamluks had been used by Muslim rulers in the Levant for centuries. Fiercely loyal and highly professional, these warriors were the product of an elaborate system of slavery and military training. Most were Turks from the Russian steppes, north of the Black Sea; captured as boys, they were sold to Islamic potentates in the near and Middle East and then indoctrinated in the Muslim faith and trained in the arts of war.

Elite slave soldiers

By 1250, regiments of these elite slave-soldiers formed the backbone of the Ayyubid army (indeed, they were instrumental in ensuring the defeat of Louis' invasion), and in the decade that followed they overthrew the last vestiges of Ayyubid rule. In 1260, one mamluk commander, Sultan Baybars, emerged as the overall leader of the new Mamluk state – a man hungry for power, unflinchingly ruthless and supremely gifted in the arts of war. This blue-eyed Caucasian slave became an unrivalled champion of Islamic jihad.

Baybars had already proven himself as a general, playing a central role in defeating the ferocious Mongols at the battle of Ayn Jalut. He now set about extending and perfecting the Mamluk military machine – creating perhaps the most formidable fighting force of the Middle Ages.

Baybars ploughed massive financial reserves into building, training and refining the Mamluk army. In total, the number of mamluks was increased fourfold, to around 40,000 mounted troops. The core of this force was the 4,000-strong royal mamluk regiment – Baybars' new elite, schooled and

CRUSADER REVERSES

How the Christians met their match

1144

Edessa, capital of the first crusader state, is captured by the merciless Turkish warlord Zengi

1148

Attempt by the Second Crusade to besiege Damascus ends in crushing failure

Saladin defeats the forces of the kingdom of Jerusalem at the Horns of Hattin and goes on to recapture Jerusalem

Richard the Lionheart leads the Third Crusade to within a day's march of Jerusalem, but then turns back, judging that the Holy City could not be held even if it could be conquered

The Fifth Crusade's invasion of Egypt ends in defeat

German emperor Frederick II negotiates the temporary return of Jerusalem to the Christians

The forces of the kingdom of Jerusalem are annihilated at the battle of La Forbie

Sultan Baybars sacks the city of Antioch, massacring its populace

Baybars' successor, Qalawun, captures crusader Tripoli

Crusader Acre is conquered by the Mamluks – and the crusader states on the Levantine mainland come to an end

The lie of the land



MAP: MARTIN SANDERS; MAPART: J. UKAGETTY IMAGES

The crusades to the near east were waged on what was tantamount to 'home turf' for the Muslims. This simple geographical reality played a fundamental role in the war for the Holy Land. Indeed, it was probably this factor more than any other that accounted for Islam's ultimate victory over the Christian crusaders.

For the western Europeans, the difficulties of conducting sustained military campaigns thousands of miles from home during the medieval era were manifold. Issues of transport, supply, communication and logistics all posed almost insuperable challenges.

The early crusaders effectively walked 2,000 to 3,000 miles to the Holy Land – often taking years to do so – and although naval travel became the norm for Christian warriors from

the later 12th century onwards, the costs involved were enormous.

Maintaining the European crusader outposts of Outremer also proved a struggle, isolated as they were amid a sea of potential enemies. Perpetually short of fighting manpower, the crusader states had to rely upon military reinforcements, and injections of financial and material aid from the west.

Yet, evocative and potent as the fate of Jerusalem and the Holy Land might have been, western Christendom often remained immune to Outremer's urgent appeals for assistance.

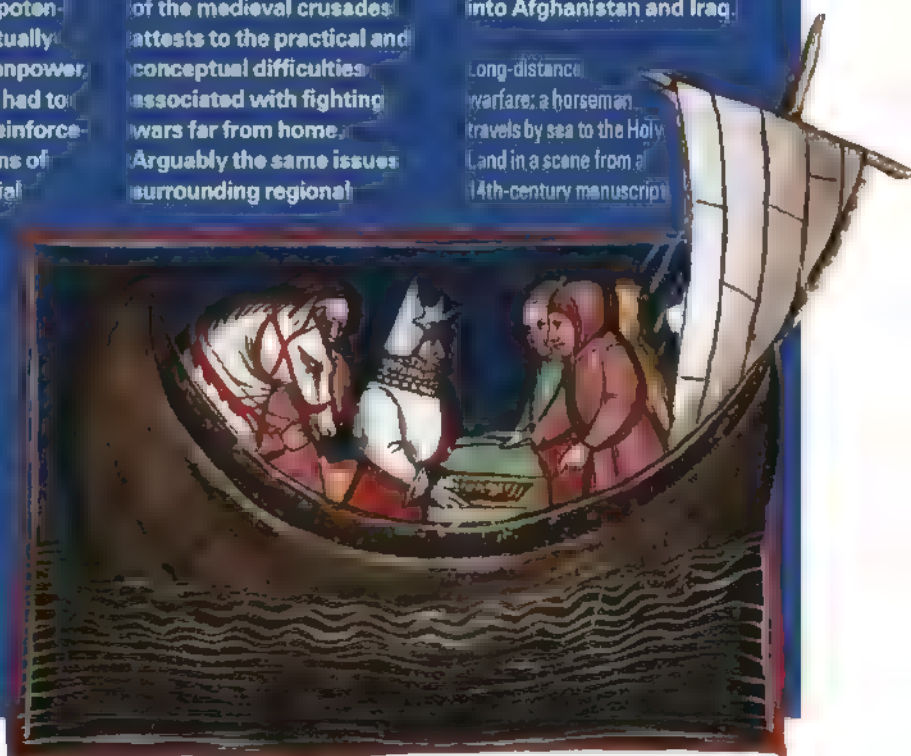
Domestic problems and concerns – from succession

disputes and dynastic rivalries to failed harvests and outbreaks of heresy – might only too easily trump the distant needs of the crusader states.

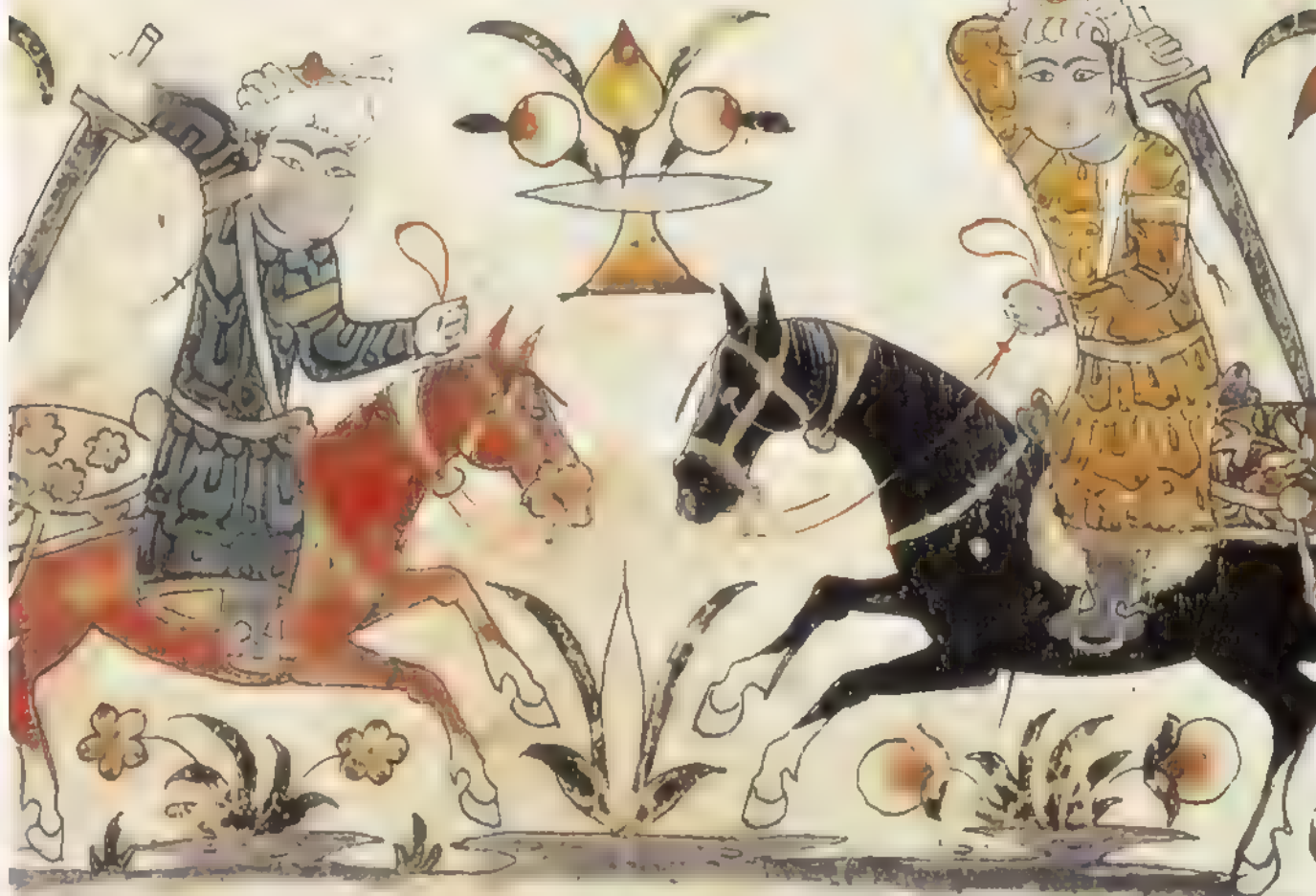
The eventual outcome of the medieval crusades attests to the practical and conceptual difficulties associated with fighting wars far from home. Arguably the same issues surrounding regional

spheres of influence continue to play a prominent role in modern conflicts, in spite of advanced technology, and help to explain the difficulties of recent American-led incursions into Afghanistan and Iraq.

Long-distance warfare: a horseman travels by sea to the Holy Land in a scene from a 14th-century manuscript.



Mamluk cavalry train for combat in a military manual from 1371. These fearsome Egyptian slave-soldiers finally overran the fractured remains of the crusader states



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honed in a special practice facility within the citadel of Cairo. Here, recruits were taught the arts of swordsmanship – learning to deliver precise strikes by repeating the same cut up to a 1,000 times a day – and horse archery with powerful composite recurve bows.

The sultan emphasised rigid discipline and rigorous military drilling across every section of the Mamluk host. His mamluks were also encouraged to experiment with new weapons and techniques, some archers even attempting to use arrows doused in Greek fire from horseback. To reinforce the human component of the Mamluk armed forces, Baybars invested in some forms of heavier armament. Close attention was paid to the development of siege weaponry, including sophisticated counter-weight catapults or ‘trebuchets’ – masterpieces of advanced military technology.

In 1265, the sultan turned the terrifying might of this Mamluk army against the fractured remnants of the crusader states. For the Christians of Outremer, themselves riven by factionalism, the results were calamitous. Baybars was able to move

through the crusader states unhindered, crushing settlements and castles almost at will. No force, nor fortress, could stand before him.

In that first year, the mighty crusader fortifications at Arsuf and Caesarea were overrun and demolished. In 1268, Baybars marched into northern Syria, broke through Antioch’s legendary battlements in a single day and then put thousands of its citizens to the sword. The ancient city was left in a state of ruin, one from which it would not recover for centuries. Even the mighty Krak des Chevaliers – perhaps the closest thing to an

impregnable castle in the medieval world – fell before a Mamluk onslaught in 1271.

Baybars’ demolition of the crusader states was all the more remarkable given that the primary concern of his reign was not the waging of a holy war against the Christians, but preparing for another Mongol invasion. In many ways, the destruction of the crusader states became little more than a sideshow, as these two new superpowers – the Mamluks and the Mongols – fought for control of the near and Middle East. After Baybars’ death in 1277, Outremer’s inexorable obliteration continued, as the sultan’s successors conquered Tripoli in 1289 and finally targeted Acre itself in 1291.

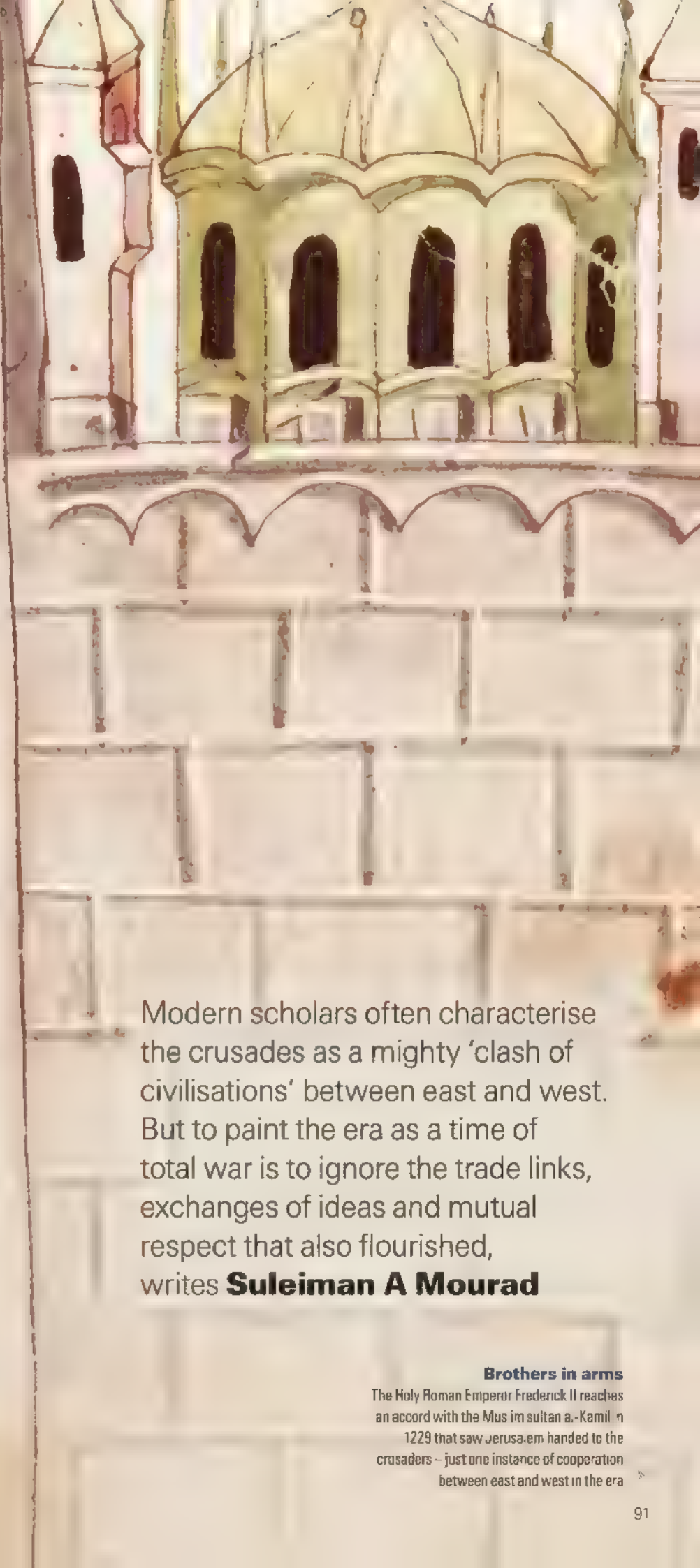
Baybars did not live to see this final triumph, but he was undoubtedly its chief architect. For the next six centuries, first under Mamluk and then Ottoman rule, the Holy Land remained in the hands of Islam. ■

The ancient city was left in a state of ruin, from which it would not recover for centuries

Thomas Asbridge is reader in medieval history at Queen Mary, University of London. His books include *The Crusades: The War for the Holy Land* (Simon & Schuster, 2010)

WAR OF THE WORLDS?





Modern scholars often characterise the crusades as a mighty 'clash of civilisations' between east and west. But to paint the era as a time of total war is to ignore the trade links, exchanges of ideas and mutual respect that also flourished, writes **Suleiman A Mourad**

Brothers in arms

The Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II reaches an accord with the Muslim sultan al-Kamil in 1229 that saw Jerusalem handed to the crusaders – just one instance of cooperation between east and west in the era

Lying in his own blood on the battlefield near Mansoura, his standard covering his grievously wounded body, Emir Fakhr al-Din left this world on 8 February 1250. He had gone out with a handful of his guards to assess the army of King Louis IX and devise a plan to defend Egypt from the onslaught of what became known as the Seventh Crusade. This was a sad ending for someone who had been at the centre of political life for more than 30 years, and only a few months earlier had become the *de facto* ruler of the Ayyubid sultanate.

Fakhr al-Din hailed from a prestigious scholarly family who only two generations previously had moved from eastern Iran to Damascus. But it was luck, too, that positioned him for greatness. His mother nursed the future Ayyubid sultan al-Kamil, which strengthened the bond between the two families. So when al-Kamil became sovereign in 1218, Fakhr al-Din was his closest confidant, and never left his side except on important missions. One of these missions was an embassy to Sicily to meet Emperor Frederick II of Hohenstaufen and negotiate an alliance between the two powers. Fakhr al-Din achieved much more than that. In the short time he stayed in Palermo, he profoundly impressed the emperor. The two conversed about science, falconry and poetry (see box on page 96), and before sailing back to Egypt, Frederick held a ceremony to knight his Muslim friend. Since then, Fakhr al-Din had carried the insignia of Frederick as Holy Roman Emperor on his staff – the same standard that wrapped his body in Mansoura.

The two agendas

The story of Fakhr al-Din sums up the history of Muslim-crusader interactions during the period. There were times for war – a lot of it. There were other times for diplomacy, alliances, friendships, commerce and the exchange of science and knowledge. There were also times when the two – war and peace – coincided. This complex legacy of the crusader period in the Middle East is little known. The reason is very simple: modern scholars have generally been attracted to studying the violence of the period – so much so that it has blurred our ability to see the other side. This was no honest mishap. We have inadvertently allowed modern agendas – one Eurocentric, the other Islamocentric – to determine the way we have reconstructed crusader history.

Indeed, since the 18th century, the Eurocentric and Islamocentric agendas



Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II's golden bulla, or seal. Frederick II sustained scholarly cooperation with the Ayyubid dynasty for several years

have imposed themselves on the historiography of the crusades. They have shaped its narrative as a clash of civilisations. In the process, all the evidence to the contrary has been silenced or ignored; if acknowledged at all, it has only been seen as inconsequential marginalia.

When crusader history is treated as 'European' history, it becomes easy to think of it as a past extension of modern Europe, tied to the national narratives of modern European countries (Italy, France and Germany, to name a few – none of which existed as such in the Middle Ages). This also tempts scholars and readers to reassess and evaluate the crusades in terms of the values they personally cherish. The Eurocentric agenda led some to imagine the crusaders as predecessors of those later colonialists whose duty was to 'civilise' the world – as in the French scholar Joseph-François Michaud's 1840 *Histoire des croisades* ('The History of the Crusades'), a book that still exerts tremendous impact in Europe in general, and France in particular. Other Europeans, influenced by the ideals of the Enlightenment or enraptured by oriental romanticism, were critical of the crusades and treated them as an ugly mix of religious fanaticism and savagery – the Europe they wanted condemned. Two great examples of this trend are Sir Walter Scott's 1825 novel *The Talisman* and the 1935 movie *The Crusades* by the great American film-maker Cecil B DeMille.

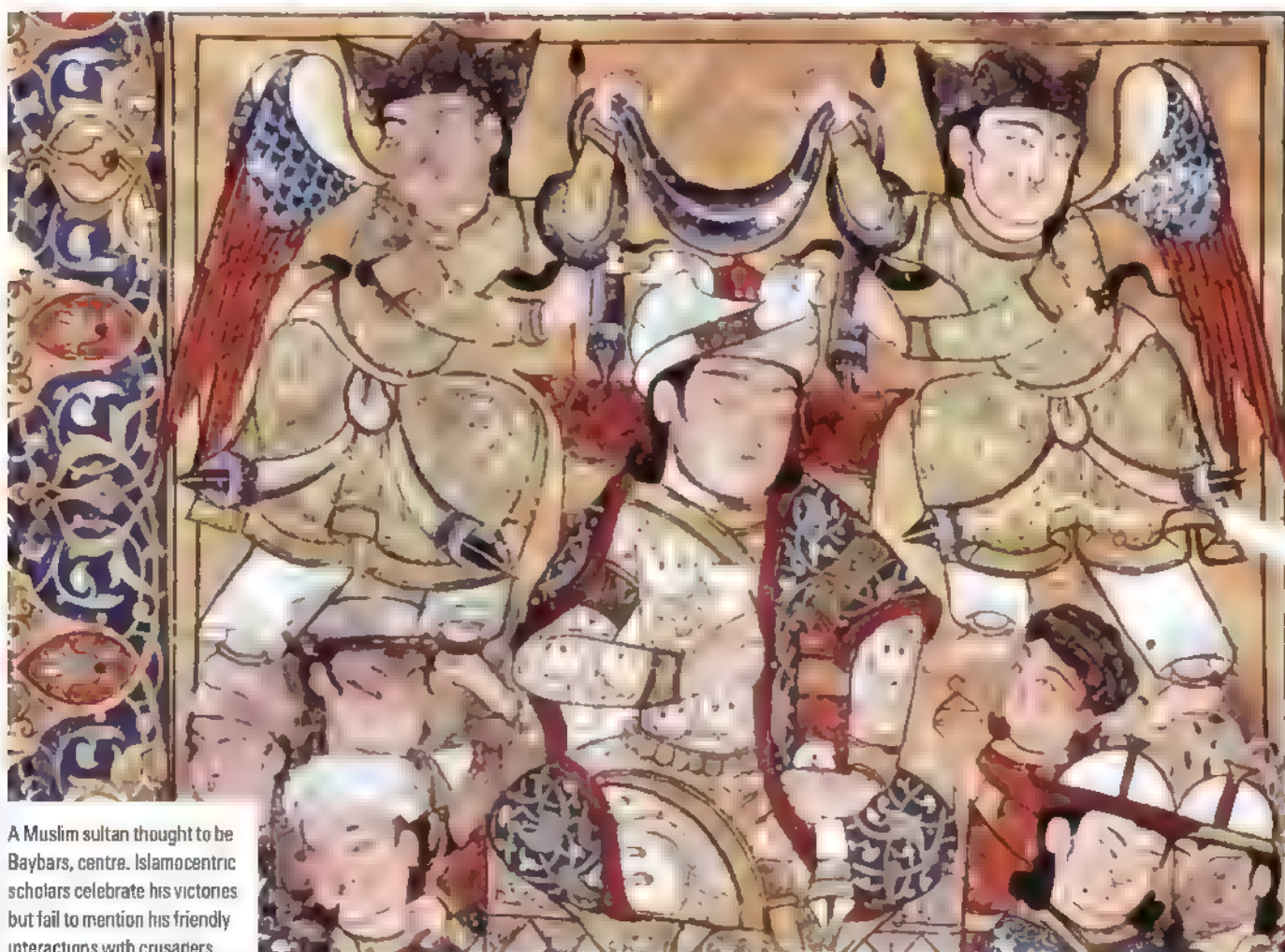
The Eurocentric reading of crusader history also gave medieval European sources a place of dominance in writing the modern narrative of the crusades. As such, non-European medieval sources, which document the experiences of Greek-Byzantines, Armenians, Muslims and Arab-Christians, are read according to the European sources. I do not mean to say that these other sources furnish a more accurate history, but they are indispensable for a proper understanding of the complexity of crusader history, and must be given a central place in the rewriting of the narrative, rather than a secondary role.

Similarly, the Islamocentric reading of crusader history was shaped during the years of colonial subjugation of most Muslim-inhabited lands, starting in the 19th century. Modern Muslim scholars have both imagined and used the crusades as a predecessor of European colonialism; they forewarn of the colonialists' evil schemes and augur that they will assuredly meet the same humiliating fate as their medieval ancestors. A great example of this trend is found in the very popular survey *Al-Haraka Al-Salibiyya* ('The Crusader Movement') by the Egyptian Said Ashour,

**We have
inadvertently
allowed modern
agendas to
determine the
way we have
reconstructed
crusader history**



Ian Keith (left) as Saladin and Henry Wicoxon (centre) as Richard the Lionheart in Cecil B DeMille's 1935 film *The Crusades* which condemns the era's savagery



A Muslim sultan thought to be Baybars, centre. Islamocentric scholars celebrate his victories but fail to mention his friendly interactions with crusaders



which was first published in 1982. These Islamocentric readings selectively employ Arab sources from the period, and champion specific figures – such as Saladin and Baybars – by exaggerating their anti-crusader accomplishments, and ignoring their friendly interactions with certain groups among the crusaders.

In more recent decades, the Eurocentric reading has been nuanced but never completely challenged, while the Islamocentric reading has not changed at all, thanks to the political situation in the Muslim world. My point in raising these issues is that crusader scholarship – like many other areas in academia – has failed to recognise its subjectivity, and that the ways we conceive the past are largely determined by the intellectual moods and locations of the readers of history.

“Christian pigs and filth”

The crusades was not a clash of civilisations. Only a fool would say that the Muslims and crusaders loved each other, but this does not justify going to the other extreme – for the sources (especially the Islamic ones) draw a mosaic picture of the period, featuring wars and alliances, boycott and exchange, hatred and amicability and myriad shades in between. In other words, there were never two camps. There were,

The Islamic sources draw a mosaic of war and alliance, boycott and trade, hatred and amicability and myriad shades in between

An Islamic astrolabe from Zaragoza, dated to c1079. Muslim scholars were consulted by their Christian peers on matters of astronomy



however, many actors, with different agendas and varying schemes to achieve them.

A window into this complex reality is provided in *The Travels of Ibn Jubayr*. A Muslim secretary from medieval Iberia (Spain), Ibn Jubayr, who died in 1217, sojourned in the eastern Mediterranean and saw things not always palatable to his taste. One observation he made was that, despite occasional wars between the Muslims and crusaders, merchants and commerce continued to move freely between the two realms as if everything was normal. For him, this was a sign of the corruption of rulers on both sides. In one instance, in the summer of 1184, he crossed the plain from the Sea of Galilee to Acre, where he discovered countless farming villages inhabited by Muslims who seemed to him to live in complete harmony with the crusaders. What irritated Ibn Jubayr the most was not only that the crusaders were not harming the Muslims. He bemoaned the fact that these Muslims did not seem bothered by their mingling with – to use his words – “Christian pigs and filth”. As such, in Ibn Jubayr’s eyes, these Muslims could not have been good Muslims.

The complexity of the crusader period is apparent in the contemporary Muslim sources. For instance, the physician and chronicler Ibn Abi Usaibia (d1270) recounts

A jeweller, herbalist, butcher and baker in a 13th century Turkish manuscript. Despite the wars, commerce moved freely between the two realms



the story of an envoy from Emperor Frederick II arriving sometime in the 1220s at the court of the Muslim ruler of Mosul bearing a list of questions on astronomy for a specific scholar, Kamal al-Din Ibn Yunus. The emperor knew from his court philosopher, Theodore of Antioch, that only Ibn Yunus could solve them. Ibn Yunus obliged and provided the answers to the envoy, who carried them back to Sicily. On a different occasion, another envoy was sent to Cairo to seek answers for mathematical problems, and Sultan al-Kamil instructed his court's mathematicians to write down their solution and send them back to Frederick.

The scholarly cooperation between Frederick II and the Ayyubids was sustained for several years. Al-Kamil's son, Sultan al-Salih Ayyub, delegated the logician and jurist Siraj al-Din al-Urmawi to the court of Frederick in Palermo, and while there al-Urmawi authored a book on logic for the emperor. A few years after that, in 1261, the jurist and logician Ibn Wasil travelled to Apulia in southern Italy on an embassy from the Mamluk sultan Baybars to Frederick's son King Manfred. He stayed for two years in Manfred's court in Barletta, and like al-Urmawi before him, Ibn Wasil wrote a book on logic that he dedicated to his host, which he titled *The Imperial Treatise*.

Charts from a Persian edition of the 12th-century Arabic work *The Wonders of Creation*. Muslim scholars refined older scientific ideas



There is also the example of the scholar al-Harawi, who, almost a century before, took up residency in Jerusalem for several weeks in 1173, during which time he frequently visited and prayed in the Islamic shrine known as the Dome of the Rock. The crusaders had transformed the building into a church, which they called 'Templum Domini', or the Temple of the Lord. Al-Harawi, who was fanatical about alchemy, was a regular feature in the royal court of Jerusalem's King Amalric. More importantly, in his *A Lonely Wayfarer's Guide to Pilgrimage*, al-Harawi criticised and deconstructed many of the popular customs of making pilgrimage to particular shrines and religious sanctuaries in Palestine and the surrounding regions as reflective of popular Muslim superstitions and false associations. Yet his observations attest to numerous cases of Muslims, Christians and Jews converging on the same spots to worship. Some of these locations were under crusader rule, and others where under Muslim rule.

This complex reality of Muslim crusader interaction is not properly studied, and though it is known to some modern scholars, in general it is not taken seriously. The main reason for this is the modern fascination with the

INFORMATION EXCHANGE

Four medieval innovations that arose through collaboration between crusaders and their Muslim counterparts.

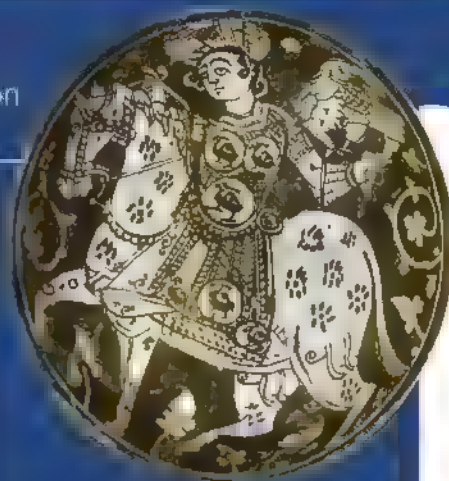


The Islamic world produced the first specially trained pharmacists, and attracted Christian scholars to learn the new understanding of medicine.

MEDICINE

In the 1110s and 1120s, Stephen of Pisa journeyed to Antioch in search of Arabic knowledge, specifically philosophy. His desire for learning the superior sciences of the Muslims led him into other fields, including medicine and astronomy. He copied some books and acquired others. First in Antioch, and then in Pisa, he led a team, including

a Muslim convert to Christianity, to translate these works into Latin for European scholars. It is thanks to the first Stephen composed as a result of his translation of Ali ibn al-Abbas's *The Complete Book on the Craft of Medicine* that many Arabic medical names entered the medieval vocabulary in Europe. Some are still in use today.



A 12th-century Fatimid ceramic bowl featuring a mounted falconer. Emperor Frederick II drew on Arabic works when writing his treatise on falconry.

FALCONRY

A great admirer of falconry, Emperor Frederick II developed such a passion for the subject that he once decided to author a book on the subject. He first asked some scholars in his court to translate for him the authoritative Arabic book on falconry, *Kitab al-Mutawakkil*, attributed to the ninth-century Abbasid caliph al-Mutawakkil, and other Arabic books as well. They showed Frederick how to study falconry as a science based on observations and tests. Together, they inspired Frederick's *De arte venandi cum avibus* (*On the Art of Hunting With Birds*), which scholars consider the first 'scientific' study on birds of prey.

study of violence and warfare during the crusader era. If we were to invest serious attention into the more peaceful aspects of Muslim-crusader interactions, the entire field of crusader historiography would be transformed. Again, it must be made clear that I am not talking about a *convivencia* – the disputed 'golden age' of tolerance that supposedly existed between faith groups in medieval Andalusia – but instead a complex web of interactions between crusaders and Muslims that cannot and must not be reduced to one thing only: violence.

An avenue for ideas

In the history of the transmission of knowledge between the Islamic civilisation, which featured a burgeoning scientific culture, and medieval Europe, two main avenues have

been identified. This Islamic civilisation was shaped by Muslims, Christians, Jews and others, who improved and corrected many of the older sciences of the Hellenic, near eastern, Persian and South Asian civilisations in mathematics, astronomy, philosophy, optics, logic and theology. One avenue for the flow of ideas was through medieval Spain, which has received most of the modern scholarly attention. The other is via the Byzantine empire. There is also Sicily, but attention to this possibility has largely been limited to the reign of Frederick. Similarly, direct interactions during the crusader period between Muslims and Christians has not yet received a sufficient level of attention, although a few scholars, notably Charles Burnett, have made a case for it.

One location that witnessed the direct exchange of knowledge was crusader Antioch. Pisans, in particular, benefited from the fact that they had developed a commercial base in the city, picking up a lot of Arabic scientific books which they brought home and translated into Latin. It was in Antioch in the 1120s that Stephen of Pisa (see box above) came across Ali ibn al-Abbas al-Majusi's 10th-century *Kitab al-Malaki* ('The Complete Book on the Craft of Medicine') and brought it home to Italy. There he translated it into Latin, and for several centuries the volume became a must-read on the practice and theory of the medical profession. Also, more complete manuscripts of Ptolemy's *Almagest*, the infamous mathematical-astronomical masterpiece, were brought

ARCHITECTURE

When Saladin took control of Egypt and ended the reign of the Fatimids in the 1170s, he constructed his palace on a promontory beneath the Muqattam hills in medieval Cairo, away from the alien Shia and Christian communities. Many of the artisans who worked there were captive crusaders and employed techniques unknown to the Muslims and others in the Middle East. Crusader architecture was much stronger and more durable, and allowed for bigger structures than those the locals were used to. The Muslims gradually learned these techniques of building and fortification by observing and studying the crusader castles that were spread all over the eastern Mediterranean.



Wellstone from the 12th/13th-century Montfort Castle in Israel. Muslims learned the techniques of fortification by studying crusader strongholds.



A flock of sheep pictured in a 14th-century handbook of health. A dispute regarding ovine ownership was the subject of a pioneering lawsuit between Usama ibn Munqidh and the King of Jerusalem.

JUSTICE

During one of his many visits to crusader Acre, Usama ibn Munqidh, a nobleman who fought many battles against the Christians, brought a case against the Lord of Banias for seizing a flock of sheep belonging to him. Usama presented his grievance there to the King of Jerusalem, who convened a jury

of knights to adjudicate the case. After hearing both sides, the jury retreated to a room to deliberate, and came back to deliver a verdict in favour of Usama. The king had no choice but to accept their verdict. This was how the Muslims came to know about jury justice.

from Antioch and retranslated into Latin, infusing new energy into both areas of study.

Complex relations

In the winter of 2016, the Al Jazeera network aired the first episode of its documentary on the crusades, which featured a lineup of notable scholars. The narrator opened the episode with these words: "In the history of conflict between east and west, the mightiest battle between Christianity and Islam. A holy war in the name of religion. For the first time: the story of the crusades from an Arab perspective."

It is clear that this new, 'first time' story is the same old yarn about violence that has been told and retold since the 18th century. But medieval sources, especially the Muslim chronicles, tell us a different story. Few today

The period was, for some, an opportunity to kill, loot and amass riches and fame. For others, it was a time for alliance and exchange

will listen to it, however, because the one that feeds the clash of civilisation discourse is more captivating, more exploitable.

The period was, for some, an opportunity to kill, loot and amass riches and fame. There were others who saw it as an occasion for commerce, alliances or the exchange of knowledge. There were some who pursued both. This is crusader history as it was, and it is this complexity that we as historians ought to present. We might not be able to free ourselves of our biases, but we should at least be beholden to the intricacy of history. ■

Suleiman A Mourad is professor of religion at Smith College, Massachusetts, and an associate member of the Nantes Institute for Advanced Study. His books include *The Mosaic of Islam* (Verso, 2016)

Top 10 crusading landmarks

From Christ's final resting place to the spiritual centre of Byzantium, via a mountain fortress stronghold and Andalusia's extraordinary Alhambra, **Jonathan Phillips** takes us on a tour of the crucial sites in crusader history

1 The Church of the Holy Sepulchre Jerusalem

The crusaders' ultimate goal

In 1095, Pope Urban II urged the knights of western Europe to liberate Jerusalem from the Muslims, saying: "May you be especially moved by the Holy Sepulchre of Our Lord, which is in the hands of unclean races." In launching the First Crusade, Urban initiated a movement that came to have an extraordinary durability and range, but in 1095 he was especially focused on Christendom's most sacred site: the tomb in which Jesus's body was believed to have been placed after the crucifixion. Within decades of conquering Jerusalem in 1099, the crusaders built much of the church we see today, drawing together the

Sepulchre, Calvary (the site of the crucifixion) and other shrines. When Saladin captured Jerusalem in 1187, he respected the integrity of the Holy Sepulchre, although the tombs of the crusader kings were smashed by Turkic invaders in 1244. While many other churches are larger or more beautiful, none can match the spiritual intensity of the Holy Sepulchre. Under a complex and sometimes fractious arrangement, monks from the Greek Orthodox, Armenian, Catholic, Coptic, Ethiopian and Syriac churches perform their liturgical observances as pilgrims and tourists continue to flood in.



2 The Haram al-Sharif Jerusalem

Saladin's great rallying point for the jihad against the crusaders

The Haram al-Sharif (Noble Sanctuary) in Jerusalem, also known as Temple Mount, is the third most important site in Islam after Mecca and Medina. It's the place where the Prophet arrived in the Holy City and then ascended to heaven during the *Isra*, his night journey from Mecca. In the late seventh century, the Umayyads built a stunning shrine called the Dome of the Rock, a blend of beautiful mosaics and multicoloured tiles, topped off by a famous golden centrepiece. Also on the Haram al-Sharif stands al-Aqsa

Mosque, constructed originally by Caliph Umar when he took the city in 638 – although what we see today dates from later, with some of the facade constructed by the Knights Templar. During the 12th century, the Muslim jihad against the crusaders gathered momentum, and the desire to recover these sites for Islam – and defeat the crusader states – became a major source of motivation. Once Saladin took Jerusalem in 1187, he restored both buildings and added inscriptions to celebrate his personal religious commitment and the victory of his faith.

3 Acre Israel

The lifeline of the crusader states

As the major port of the crusader states, Acre was a crucial lifeline to western Europe, with the ships of Genoa, Pisa and Venice bringing a vast influx of trade and pilgrims to the Holy Land. Europeans mixed with merchants from Alexandria, Damascus and Constantinople, and life in the city was a powerful sensory experience: one visitor wrote that "its streets are choked by the press of men, so that it is hard to put foot to ground... it stinks and is filthy, being full of refuse and excrement".

During an epic siege from August 1189 to July 1191, King Guy of Jerusalem tried to wrest it from Saladin, before the arrival of Richard the Lionheart brought victory to the Christians. Acre became the capital of the kingdom of Jerusalem until its fall to the Mamluks in 1291. Today, the city gives a tremendous sense of the medieval age – especially the huge compound of the Knights Hospitaller, expertly excavated and restored by Israeli archaeologists.



4 Hagia Sophia

Istanbul

Byzantium's spiritual heart, torn out by the Fourth Crusade

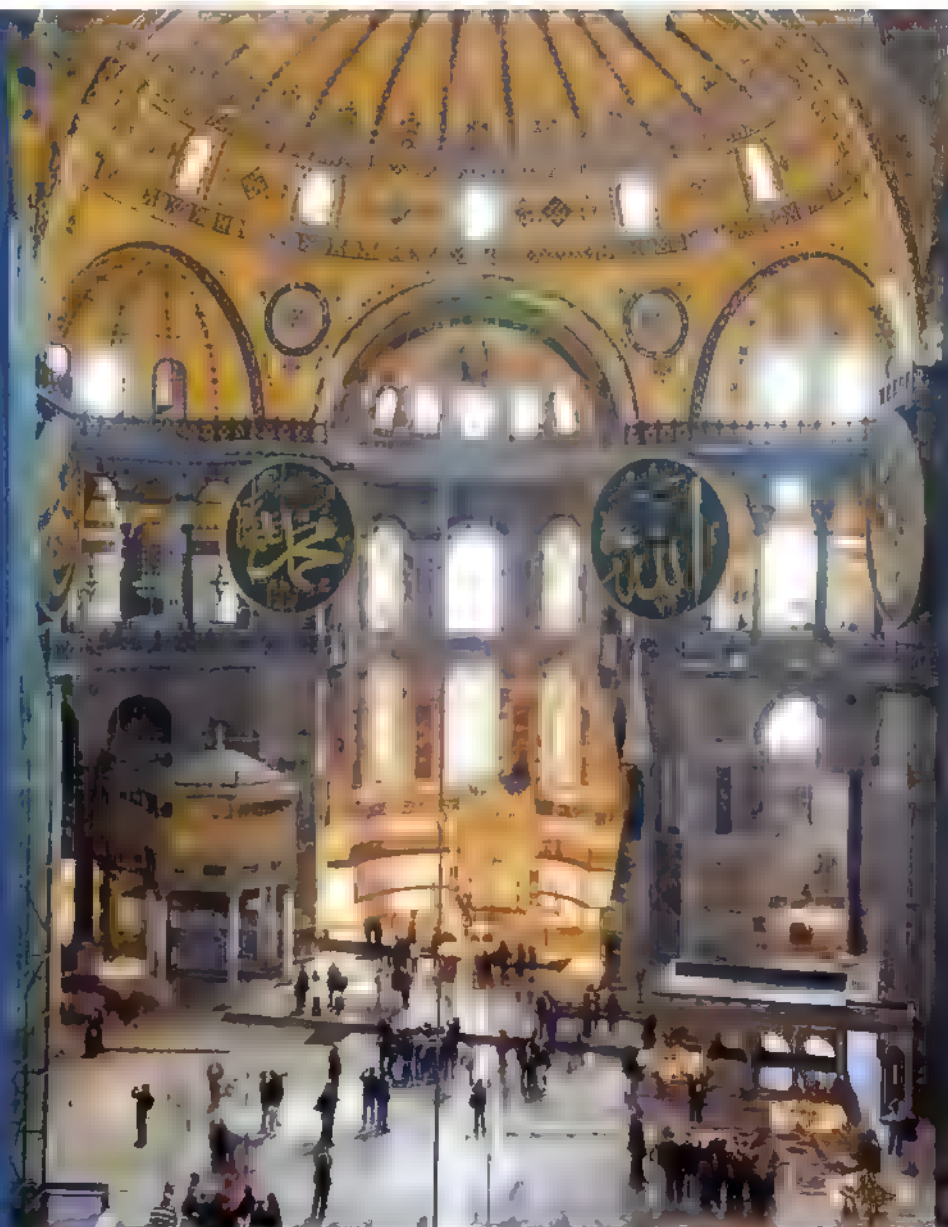
At the heart of the queen of cities, the Byzantines described Constantinople, stands the Hagia Sophia (Church of Holy Wisdom). Inaugurated in 532 and for centuries the biggest church in the world, it was sacked and looted during the Fourth Crusade in 1204.

But a century later, in 1261, the city was recaptured by the Byzantines and the church was restored.

But a century later, in 1261, the city was recaptured by the Byzantines and the church was restored. However, the church was again sacked and looted during the Fourth Crusade in 1204.

A prostitute was said to have danced around the altar of the church while animals loaded with booty fouled the floors. Some of the plunder remains in St Mark's Basilica in Venice. Constantinople was recovered in 1261, but it fell to the Ottomans in 1453 and the Hagia Sophia became a mosque, with its mosaics covered. Atatürk removed the mosaics in 1935.

Today, the church is a mosque, but it is open to non-Muslim visitors. It is one of the most important religious sites in the world.



5 Malbork Castle Poland

1261-1276, 1280-1309, 1309-1384
Teutonic Knights

The Teutonic Knights were originally founded at the siege of Acre during the Third Crusade, but this military order, closely modelled on the Knights Hospitaller, came to be of far greater influence in north-eastern Europe than in the Holy Land. From the 1230s, the acquisition of territories in Prussia and Livonia, coupled with strong papal support, made it an enormously powerful and wealthy institution designed to wage a perpetual crusade, and drive the Christian faith deep into pagan lands. Founded in 1280, and from 1309 the seat

of the order's grand master, the castle at Malbork – known as 'Marienburg' in German – acted as a symbol of the Teutonic Knights' strength, as well as a major administrative centre. A series of building programmes produced the magnificent refectory and a new chapel, along with later defences intended to resist cannon fire. Today located in Poland, this huge complex is striking for its brick construction, and reminds us of the geographical and ideological range of the crusading dream.



6

Montségur France

Remote Cathar sanctuary high in the Pyrenees

Around 220 Cathars were
burned alive inside the
hilltop fort of Montségur
in 1244 after a desperate
last stand

Perched at an altitude

of 1,200m, the hilltop
refuge of a large
Cathar community – believ-
ers in a dualist faith
and a simple lifestyle –

proved highly attrac-
tive to many in
France. In 1208

Catharism posed

serious a threat to

authority of the

church that it

target of crusades

the uniting of

poly-

Mont-



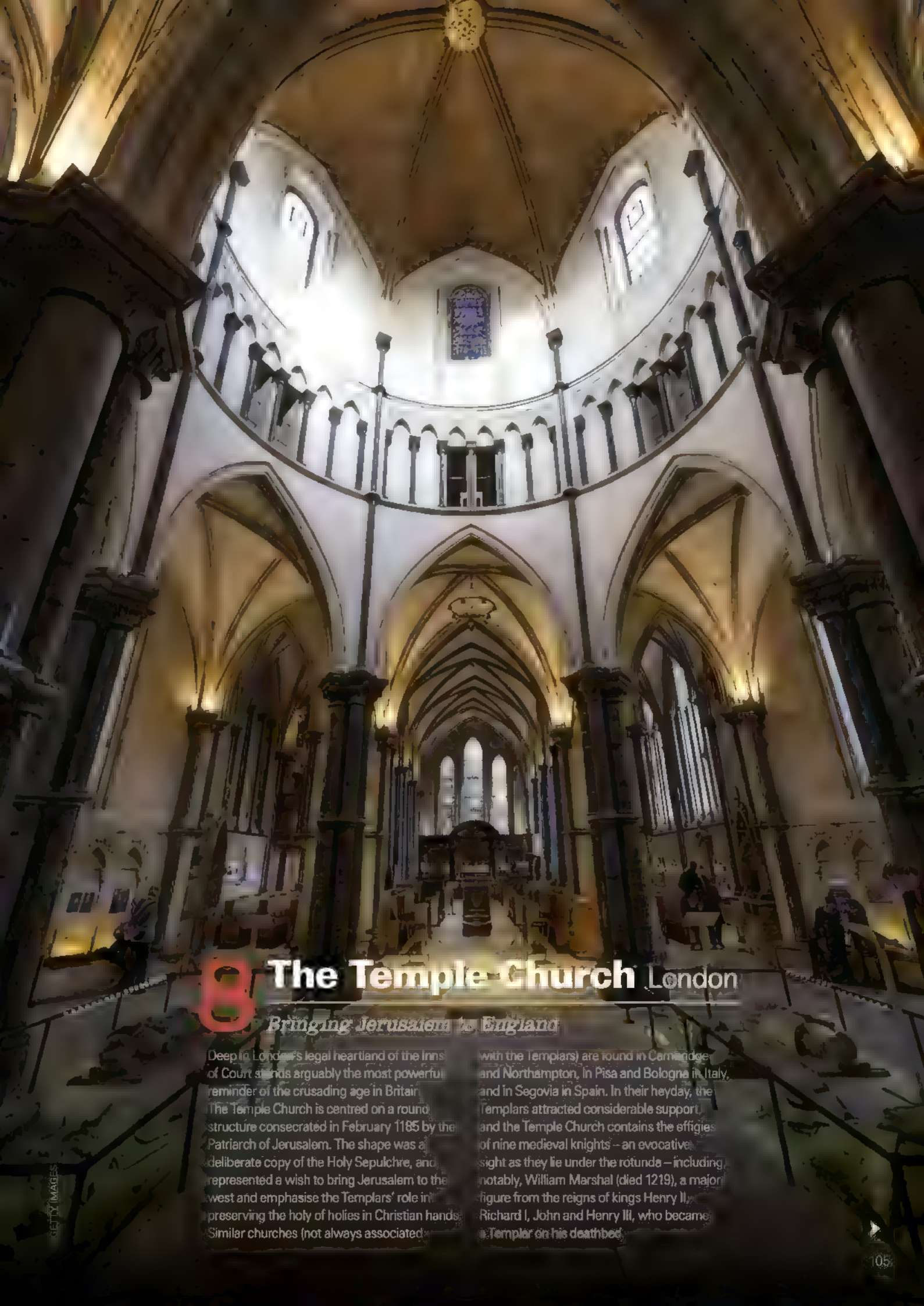
7 Valletta Malta

*Splendid port city and
stronghold of the Hospitallers
against the Ottoman Turks*

The Knights Hospitaller
were, along with the
Templars, warrior monks
dedicated to the defence
of the Holy Land. After
the fall of Acre in 1291,
they retreated to Cyprus,
then to Rhodes, which
was lost to the Otto-
mans in 1522, prompting
their move to Malta. For
centuries the Ottoman
Turks represented the
main threat to Christen-
dom, and the Order of
St John, by continuing
their vocation of fighting

for the faith, were an
important bulwark
against them. A massive
Ottoman attempt to take
the island failed in 1565
and in the aftermath the
master decided to build
a new city overlooking
the Grand Harbour.
Valletta was the first
planned city in modern
Europe, and its huge
walls, orderly grid of
streets, Grandmaster's
Palace, fine churches
and hospital buildings
still remain today.

**Its huge walls,
ordered streets and
fine churches still
remain today**



The Temple Church London

Bringing Jerusalem to England

Deep in London's legal heartland of the Inns of Court stands arguably the most powerful reminder of the crusading age in Britain. The Temple Church is centred on a round structure consecrated in February 1185 by the Patriarch of Jerusalem. The shape was a deliberate copy of the Holy Sepulchre, and represented a wish to bring Jerusalem to the west and emphasise the Templars' role in preserving the holy of holies in Christian hands. Similar churches (not always associated

with the Templars) are found in Cambridge and Northampton, in Pisa and Bologna in Italy, and in Segovia in Spain. In their heyday, the Templars attracted considerable support, and the Temple Church contains the effigies of nine medieval knights – an evocative sight as they lie under the rotunda – including notably, William Marshal (died 1219), a major figure from the reigns of kings Henry II, Richard I, John and Henry III, who became a Templar on his deathbed.



9 The Alhambra Granada

Site of the final defeat of Muslim Spain

Granada is dominated by the Alhambra, a sprawling complex containing the sumptuous palaces built by the Nasrid dynasty in the 14th century. They represent the epitome of the style and sophistication of Islamic Spain, an era that began in 711 with an invasion from north Africa. By the late 11th century, Christian kingdoms had begun to push the Muslims southwards and the rallying call of the crusades, offering a spiritual reward for fighting, gave the conflict a far harsher edge.

Victory at the battle of Las Navas de Tolosa in 1212 did much to advance the Christian position, yet the Muslims retained a foothold in the peninsula for almost another 300 years. By 1492, not even the formidable defences of the Alhambra could resist the ~~yearly~~ ^{very} well-organised armies of Ferdinand and Isabella, and the surrender of Emir Muhammad XII, also known as Boabdil, on 2 January stands as an important watershed in the history of the crusades.



10 Cathedral of St Lawrence Genoa

Where faith met commerce in medieval Italy

Dramatic striped stonework and a trio of finely decorated doorways announce the powerful presence of the Cathedral of St Lawrence deep in the medieval streets of Genoa. Inside the church (an uneasy blend of medieval columns and baroque gold) the treasury houses a stunning, emerald-green glass bowl, believed by Genoese crusaders to have been used at the Last Supper. This object represents the religiosity often seen as absent from Italian crusaders' determination to seek commercial gain, showing the Genoese were comfortable with such a combination. High on the south wall of the nave, fragments of a fresco

depict Genoese involvement in the capture of Tortosa in Spain during the Second Crusade (1148), and a celebration of Genoa's achievements in the crusading cause. Down at the quayside, the infirmary and pilgrimage church of the Knights Hospitaller – San Giovanni d'Prè – stands as another marker of Genoa's close links with the campaigns. **11**

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Jonathan Phillips is professor of crusading history at Royal Holloway, University of London, and the author of several books including *The Life and Legend of the Sultan Saladin* (Bodley Head, 2019)



A bronze wreath placed on Saladin's tomb by Kaiser Wilhelm II in 1898. It was given to the Imperial War Museum by T.E. Lawrence, who said "Saladin no longer required it"

Is the world still living in the shadow of the crusades?

Seven centuries after the crusaders left the Holy Land, how do their attempts to claim Jerusalem for the west live on today? Six experts examine the modern legacy of the medieval religious wars, and how it plays out in the Middle East and around the globe

Suleiman A Mourad

“We invoke the crusades because we want to believe that the past determines the present”



Do we live in the shadow of the crusades? This question suggests a passive role on our part, as if what happened back then explains what happens now. But history is often shaped by what, why and how we choose to remember. History is about the way the present writes the past.

The history of the crusades is told invariably as a savage, religiously inspired clash of civilisations between medieval European Christians and oriental Muslims. We think that this explains (at least in part) modern violence and the political tension between the west and Muslim countries, and link today's conflicts to what happened centuries ago between the crusaders and the Muslims.

Some do this by habit, others by connivance. Irrespective of motives, our tendency is to stereotype the present and the past, and to reject their complexity. Indeed, when British general Edmund Allenby entered Jerusalem in 1917, following the defeat of the Ottoman army in southern Palestine, the British media compared him to Richard the Lionheart. When French general Henri Gouraud captured Damascus in 1920, following the French army's crushing defeat of Arab nationalists, he reputedly stood in front of Saladin's grave and orated: "Awake, Saladin – we have returned." Meanwhile, the US wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria are often denounced by Muslim politicians as crusader invasions.

We invoke the crusades because we want to believe that the past determines the present – that these are but different chapters in the same ongoing conflict, and that many people are adamant that old scores must be settled.

What gets lost in this modern exploitation of crusader history is its complex reality. That period of the Middle Ages witnessed a lot of violence, but also countless cases of cooperation and political and military alliance, as well as the exchange of goods and science, and forms of religious tolerance between Muslims and crusaders (see page 90). When the modern history of the crusades was written, starting in the 19th century, scholars were drawn to its violence. They ignored the other evidence because they found no use for it. When we do, though, the history of the crusades will be written differently.

Suleiman A Mourad is historian of Islam and professor of religion at Smith College, Massachusetts, and associate fellow at the Nantes Institute for Advanced Study, France.

Helen Nicholson

“We still live with many of the developments encouraged by the crusades: state taxation, magnificent castles, charitable work”



We are still living with the constructed memory of the crusades, and with the mindset that prompted them. Populist religious and national leaders construct myths around the crusades to promote their religious or political agendas, urging their followers to avenge the crusades or to continue in the footsteps of the crusades.

In addition, the word 'crusade' has come to mean any struggle against moral wrong – so we have a crusade against drug abuse, or a crusade against poverty. The human urge to intervene on the side of moral good in order to destroy evil still prompts individuals to join great undertakings couched in moral terms, such as the thousands who travelled from Britain in the 1930s to fight against fascism in the Spanish Civil War, or the young people who joined the so-called Islamic State in Syria.

But were the original crusades a moral battle against evil? Not really. The First Crusade began in 1095 with the Byzantine emperor Alexius I Comnenus's plans to recover territory lost over the previous 20 years to the Seljuk Turks. It evolved into a Frankish-Norman expedition to capture Jerusalem, which had changed hands four times in the preceding three decades. So were the crusades really about controlling and?

By the late 14th century, crusades focused on halting the Ottoman advance into the Balkans – suggesting that the crusades were about defence against an apparently unstoppable enemy. We could compare the crusades to Nato, since crusades involved the cooperation of many nations in an operation of mutual benefit. We could also compare them to the United Nations' peacekeeping operations, because most Crusades were promoted by the Latin church, a supra-national organisation. But these comparisons quickly break down under scrutiny.

It would be truer to say that we still live with many of the developments encouraged by the crusades: systems of state taxation, magnificent castles and the kind of services performed by the likes of the Order of St John of Jerusalem, now the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, which undertakes charitable work around the world.

Helen Nicholson is professor of medieval history at Cardiff University.



France brings peace, progress, civilisation and commerce to its colonies in a 1900 illustration. "European powers used pseudo-crusading rhetoric to justify their imperial and colonial wars," says Rebecca Rist



A manuscript illumination shows a Christian and a Muslim playing chess "That period witnessed a lot of violence, but also countless cases of cooperation and political and military alliance," says Suleiman A Mourad

Rebecca Rist

"Many Muslims do not view the crusades, which they believe they won, as markedly special events"



In the modern era, western nations have often looked back with enthusiasm to the crusades, and crusading language has been used by many politicians and movements to justify their actions. In the 17th century Louis Maimbourg's *History of the Crusades* (1675) was used as propaganda for the persecution of Protestants in France during the reign of Louis XIV. In the 19th century, European powers used pseudo-crusading and para-crusading rhetoric to justify their imperial and colonial wars.

In the 20th century, crusades were depicted in political cartoons during the First World War. Crusade rhetoric was also a key feature of America's Cold War discourse, as employed by presidents Harry S Truman and Dwight D Eisenhower when collaborating with Pope Pius XII to denounce the evils of Stalin and Soviet rule.

More recently, certain American movements – for the abolition of slavery, the war against Mormon polygamy, the prohibition of alcohol, and the civil rights movement headed by Martin Luther King – have been cited as examples of modern crusades.

The word 'crusade', then, continues to be used to denote a cause in which people believe strongly – a war waged, for instance, for human rights or against illegal practices. Yet all medieval crusades except the first were ultimately failures, unsuccessful in retaking Jerusalem or maintaining the crusader states.

In the 19th century, the west's increasing hegemony – seen in the colonialism, imperialism and trade of that era – began to appear to the Islamic world as an attempt to overcompensate for the failures of medieval crusades. For that reason, and others, the crusades continue to affect how the east views the west today.

Yet many Muslims do not view the crusades, which they believe they won, as markedly special events, since Islam and Christianity have frequently been at odds since the seventh century – long before the First Crusade (1095–99). Hence the crusades are, rather, just one expression of a longstanding rivalry between east and west, Muslim and Christian. It is that legacy with which we are living today.

Rebecca Rist is professor in medieval history at the University of Reading. Her books include *The Papacy and Crusading in Europe, 1198–1245* (Bloomsbury, 2009)

Nicholas Paul

“The crusades’ legacy is powerful because of the predilections of 19th- and 20th-century Europeans”



Confronted with the message, propagated by both the European and Anglophone extreme right and Islamic jihadist groups, that we live in an age of renewed conflict between Islam and the West, many people may understandably conclude that we have inherited an ancient legacy of holy war. We have – though not

in the way that many imagine

The legacy of the crusades today is not due to the continuity over time of any medieval crusading institution. After all, the crusade indulgence offered by the church – a central element of the architecture of these holy wars – had effectively disappeared by the 17th century. Surviving crusading orders, such as the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, are now devoted to charitable work. And no modern state, whether in Spain, the Baltic or the eastern Mediterranean, can trace its origins to the ‘crusader states’ established by medieval conquests. Too much historical water – reformation, revolution, global exchange, the rise and fall of empires, the shock of modernity – has passed under the bridge for any modern community to still bear marks of crusading violence.

The legacy of the crusades is, nonetheless, powerful, primarily because of the passions and predilections of 19th- and 20th-century Europeans. They found in the crusades a useful past through which they sought to understand their own world of overseas empires, warring nations and rapid social change. These modern observers constructed a storehouse of popular images and stories – such as the epic encounter of Richard I and Saladin during the Third Crusade – and used them to make claims about morality and collective identity.

Western Europeans took these images and attitudes abroad – for example in 1898, when Kaiser Wilhelm II re-enacted the conquest of Jerusalem and rebuilt Saladin’s tomb at Damascus, laying a gilt bronze wreath (later taken by T.E. Lawrence and now displayed in London’s Imperial War Museum). It was in this modern context that a new historical memory of the crusades was constructed – one that stripped away fundamental elements of crusading history and is easily co-opted by those who would make a ‘clash of civilisations’ seem habitual and inevitable.

Nicholas Paul is associate professor of history at Fordham University, New York, and co-editor of *Whose Middle Ages? Teachable Moments for an Ill-Used Past* (Fordham University Press, 2019).



German Kaiser Wilhelm II in Jerusalem, 1898. During this visit, he re-enacted the conquest of the city – an example of western European powers co-opting images and stories to consolidate collective identities



A hospice in Jerusalem owned by the German Order of St John. The legacy of the Knights Hospitaller continues today in charitable and medical work around the world by organisations descended from the original order

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Christopher Tyerman

“The crusades were fought from religious conviction and material advantage relevant to their time and place, not ours”



The question itself assumes the contemporary currency of ‘the crusades’, from their use in Islamist propaganda to tired intellectual debate on a supposed clash of civilisations, to English football fans cheerfully dressing up as crusader warriors. Exactly who is ‘still living in the shadow of the crusades’?

Distanced western academics? Self-

imagined heirs of victims?

The historical crusades were not homogeneous. They affected many communities and regions very differently, prompting everything from the foundation of Prussia, the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Christian schism, attacks on European Jewry and the Spanish nationalist myth of the *Reconquista*, to the transient and peripheral occupation of parts of Syria and Palestine.

The crusades did not create western imperialism or the state of Israel. Past wars, such as the crusades, fought by populist adherence to an ideological or religious cause may excite modern recognition – ‘God wills it!’, a claim at once unprovable and unanswerable – but their legacies are imaginative and sentimental.

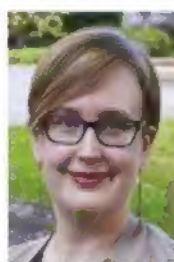
The 19th-century coincidence of romantic medievalism, Christian mission and the global spread of European empires revived and invented memories of crusading, providing spurious arguments for French and British involvement in north Africa and western Asia. Western proclamation of crusading precedents informed the counter-ideologies of indigenous regional resistance to foreign intervention. Citing historical precedent is often a sign of historical ignorance. Ironically, the bogus ‘west is best’ neo-imperialist clash-of-civilisation construct encourages its corresponding jihadist twin.

The crusades were fought for religious conviction and material advantage relevant to their time and place, not ours; they were examples of political and cultural contact as much as of contest and conquest. Their continued legacy derives from pilfering a crude vision of the past to justify contemporary conflict or victimhood. The modern near east is not a product of medieval wars, yet the shadow of the crusades lies across the rhetoric of polemicists. Insofar as this influences popular beliefs, the legacy is real; insofar as it claims to represent historical continuity, it is not.

Christopher Tyerman is professor of the history of the crusades at Hertford College, University of Oxford

Susanna Throop

“The crusades popularised specific narratives and key ideas that remain present in western cultures”



There are many legacies of the crusades, and they are disputed. In 2019, actors worldwide are calling for violence framed as either an extension of or a defence against the crusades. These appeals – and the disputes surrounding them – are highly visible in our news cycles.

It is easy to dismiss such calls to violence as historical appropriation or myth-making.

Certainly, historical accuracy is not the main priority of those referencing the crusades. But in using the crusades to claim political power, territory and a righteous obligation to be violent, modern actors are doing what many others, including various religious groups and modern nation states, have done for centuries.

At least two basic narrative structures of crusading remain in use. The first is the story of a divinely willed victory that results in both individual salvation and the profitable expansion of ‘Christianity’, such as we see in descriptions of the Latin Christian conquest of Jerusalem in 1099. The second is the story of a holy and heroic defeat, in which righteous warriors lose the battle but nonetheless win eternal salvation and earthly renown.

Underlying both these narrative structures are several key ideas: that violence on behalf of God is spiritually beneficial both for the individual and for the larger group of which they are a part; that divine will is manifest in the world, and thus crusading victory demonstrates righteousness while crusading defeat urges redoubled effort; and that there is a connection between holy violence and the assertion of group identity.

These narratives and ideas emphatically did not originate with the crusading movement: they can be identified much earlier in the history of Christianity. However, the many centuries of the crusading movement and historical work thereafter consolidated and reiterated them with vivid imagery, legends and traditions. As a result, the history of the crusades has become a ubiquitous part of the western cultural background, referenced in flags, art, family histories, sports teams and even in the brands of companies and organisations that seem entirely unrelated to the actual events. In political discourse, the history of the crusades has long been used to support or contest western nationalism and imperialism. The cultural legacy of the crusades is not only visible in the polemics of violent extremists; it surrounds us in a thousand other ways. ■

Susanna Throop is associate professor of history at Ursinus College, Pennsylvania, and author of *The Crusades: An Epitome* (Kismet, 2018)

Manasses of Hierges

Nicholas Paul tells the story of a crusader who won fame and fortune in the Holy Land

“No longer did he differ from counts in appearance, just as he did not differ from them in birth.” So an anonymous monk, writing at Brogne Abbey in modern Belgium, described

the transformation in social status of a local knight named Manasses, following his return in 1152 from a decade-long sojourn in the crusader kingdom of Jerusalem. Although Manasses’ story is not now widely known, in the Middle Ages he fascinated historians both in Palestine and at Brogne in his home region. His is a striking tale of loyalty, jealousy and sacred treasure; of a career made and broken on the crusading frontier; and of the lasting importance of crusading reputations among the European elite.

The son of an official (possibly Héribrand) at the stronghold of Bouillon, and Hodierna, a daughter of the Count of Rethel, Manasses was born c1114. His modest holdings hardly qualified for what we might call a ‘lordship’. We see glimpses of Manasses in local affairs, but always in the background. His prospects seemed limited.

His is a striking tale of loyalty, jealousy and sacred treasure; of a career made and broken on the crusading frontier



Though only of middling birth, Manasses wound up leading his cousin Queen Melisende’s army and assisting in the Second Crusade, above

In the world of the medieval aristocracy, however, family still made all the difference. For Manasses, the key facts were that his mother’s three brothers and his father’s lord, Godfrey of Bouillon, had all joined the First Crusade, and that by the time he was born, first Godfrey and then his uncle Baldwin had worn the crown of the newly established kingdom of Jerusalem. When Manasses came of age, four of his female cousins, Melisende, Alice, Hodierna, and Ivetta, ruled over the kingdom of Jerusalem, the principality of Antioch, the county of Tripoli and the abbey of Bethany. For a young man who would otherwise be somewhere among a group of knights guarding Bouillon Castle, these were quite spectacular connections.

In 1140, Manasses undertook the journey to Jerusalem. Like so many who did, his motivations were probably mixed, but duty to his family and the hope of penitential reward must have loomed large. Entering the service of his cousin Queen Melisende, he rose rapidly to the position of ‘constable’, or chief of the army. He was indispensable to the queen during the attack on the crusader states by Imad al-Din Zangi, ruler of Aleppo and Mosul, in 1144. He also helped the queen and her young son Baldwin cope with the complex challenge of hosting the armies of the Second Crusade in 1148.

After the failure of the crusade, Manasses found himself defending the kingdom from an emboldened and stronger enemy. In 1149, when Prince Raymond of Antioch was killed together with many of his nobles at the battle of Inab, Manasses headed to that city to assist his cousin Constance, Raymond’s widow. In thanks, according to the monks at Brogne, Constance gave him a relic of the True Cross that her late husband had carried into battle. Around the same time, Manasses married another powerful widow, Helvisa of Ramla. In a troubled moment, his star was clearly still ascending, and this – together with Melisende’s refusal to yield complete authority to her son, now of age – led a faction of the nobles to join the young king in a revolt against Manasses and Melisende. After a dramatic siege of the Tower of David in Jerusalem, the queen surrendered, and Manasses was banished from the kingdom around Easter 1152.

Returning home after a decade away, Manasses found his life changed by his experiences in the east. Without much difficulty, he seems to have been able to regain his lands and a proper lordship of Hierges on today’s Belgium-France border. He had his relic collection installed in his castle, and was remarried (although it is unclear whether Helvisa had actually died) to the daughter of a powerful prince. According to the monks at Brogne, he was sought out by the Count of Champagne and the Archbishop of Cologne because of his famous relic, a symbol of spiritual victory at a time when crusading armies mainly faced defeat. Even after his death in 1177, Manasses and his cross were celebrated every year in a liturgy at Brogne, where stories of his prowess in battle, his loyalty to the queen and the jealousy of the Jerusalem nobility were lovingly retold. The crusades, an endeavour that had consumed countless lives and exhausted the treasuries of kingdoms, had lifted this humble knight to the same status as a count. His story no doubt inspired others to seek their fortunes on the crusading frontier. ■

Nicholas Paul is associate professor of history at Fordham University, New York. He is the author of *To Follow in Their Footsteps: Crusades and Family Memory in the High Middle Ages* (Cornell University Press, 2012)

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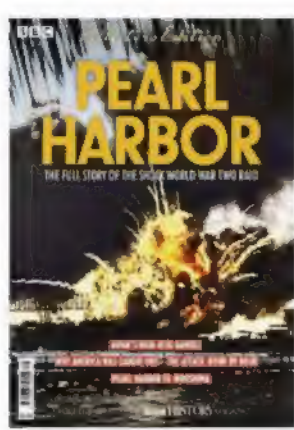
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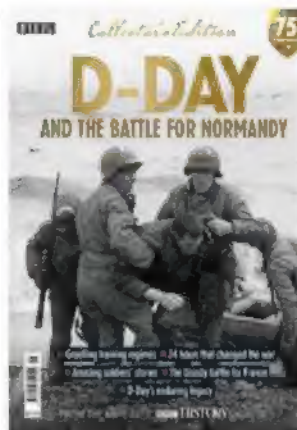
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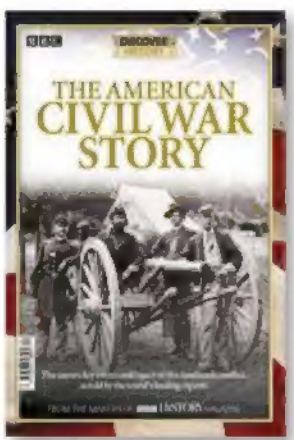
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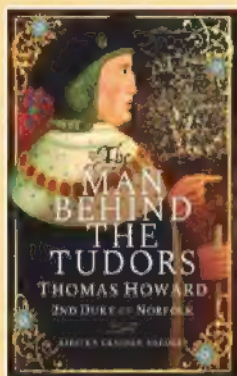
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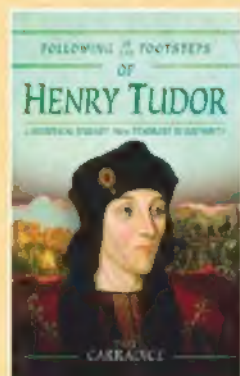
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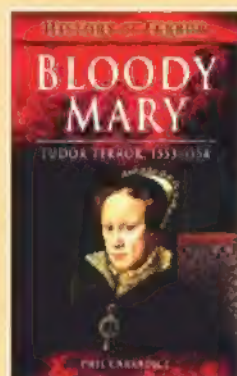
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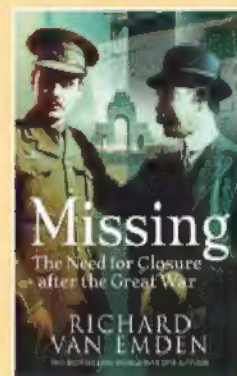
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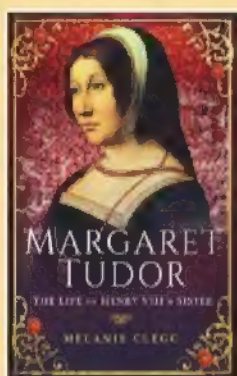
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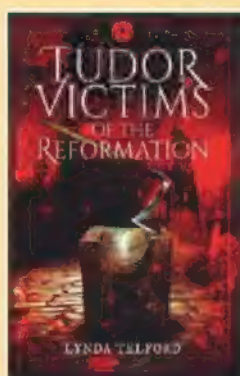
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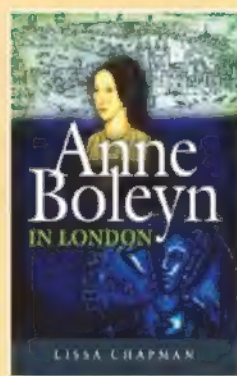
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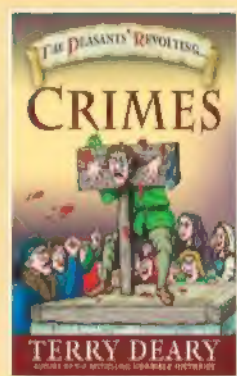
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